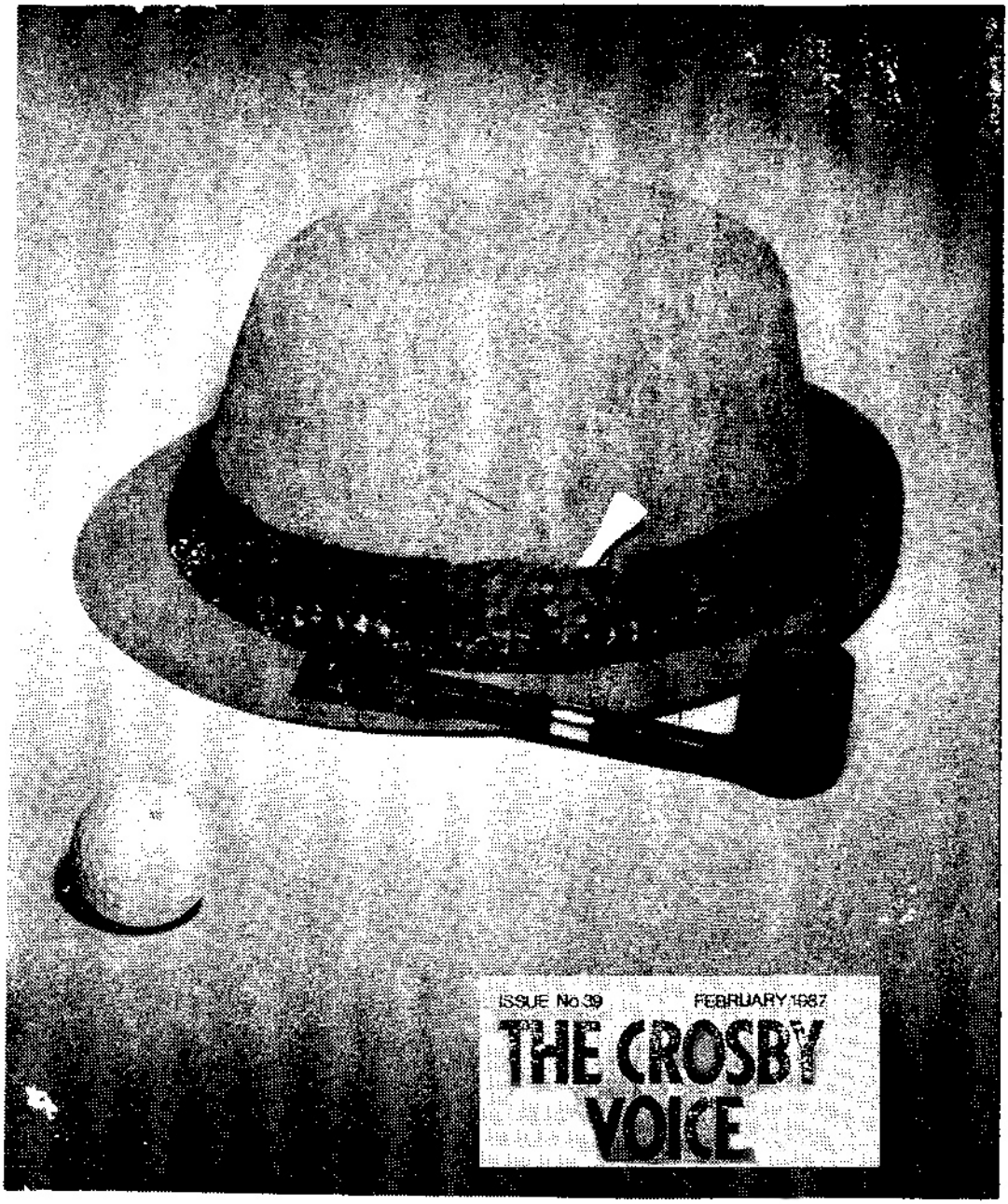

ISSUE No 39 FEBRUARY 1987

THE CROSBY VOICE

Registered by Australia Post Publication No VBH 2120

Hello again,

Sorry that this newsletter is so late this time. I just don't seem to have the spare time that I used to. Hopefully, later editions of the Crosby Voice will arrive when expected!

I hope anyway, that our lateness will be more than made up by the contents of this issue - once again it's a good thick magazine - packed with plenty of interesting reading.

On page 4, we continue Vern Taylor's latest excellent series "Transcribing Bing" and Vern has outdone himself with this one. You'll find out more about how a Crosby radio show was put together (literally!) in the late 1940's than you ever imagined. The article is also illustrated with fascinating pictures supplied by John Mullin and Norman Dewes - two men who feature extensively in the story.

We now have in our possession a copy of "The Road to Hollywood" - Fred Reynolds great book on Bing's film career. But unfortunately you can't obtain a copy. Read why you missed out and also how you can obtain a copy of another new book due out in April, on pages 23 - 25.

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Believe it or not, they've just made a new film of "High Society"! On page 27 you can read who made it, who's in it and who sings "True Love". Wonder if they'll be as good as Bing?

The two new long-promised compact discs of Crosby tracks from MCA are out (overseas anyway). We feature both covers and run down the contents on pages 31 and 32. And there are other new releases of interest including the first LP yet of TV tracks from the 1960's.

Member Clem Parkinson has submitted a poem that any member who grew up in the country (and possibly in the city) will identify with. Entitled 'House Full", it tells how Clem, as a 15 year old, managed to sneak in to see "Going My Way" when it was first released. Clem's poem starts on page 37.

Our second CROSS(BY)WORD appears on page 39. Test your knowledge of Crosby in this contribution from Diana McKie. (It's not really all that hard.)

British member Colin Pugh has supplied us with a comprhensive list of Bing releases on 8-track cartridge. You won't believe how many there are! Colin's feature takes up all of our 'Collector's Corner' for this issue, starting on page 41.

Famous American collector, Jack Souther, has a magnificent list of Crosby records for Auction. Heaps of rarities here. See the 'Trading Post' on page 48 for all the details.

From the long-defunct magazine 'Coronet', we have a 1955 pictorial article on the filming of 'Anything Goes'. This runs several pages on from page 51.

Every Crosby collector is grateful to John McNicholas for his fantastic work in turning out the Chronological Bing Crosby LP's. But did you realize just how much work goes into every single release? John has kindly written a special article for us that explains how he got the idea for the series and the problems he faced and still faces. See page 61.

And those are just a few of the highlights from this issue of the Crosby Voice. Happy reading.

FUTURE FUNCTIONS

MONDAY APRIL 27TH - FILM EVENING

As Victorian members will know, we had a list minute change of plans as regards our scheduled film "East Side of Heaven". It transpired that the print was not available for the date we required, so instead, we screened 'Waikiki Wedding" along with an American video of "King Of Jazz" (far more complete than the print available in Australia). However, the film is available for the April date so our main feature on that date will be:

EAST SIDE OF HEAVEN

As a support, we will re-screen a Russ Colombo movie we first showed several years ago:

BROADWAY THROUGH A KEYHOLE.

Venue, as always, is the theatrette of the AMP Building, corner of Bourke and William Streets, City.

Arrival time is between 7 and 7.30 when we must start to fit both films in.

There are advantages to getting there early - especially as we have just 5 copies of the new "BC - TV" album for sale and they will go to the first members who want them. (See page 36 for details of this record.)

Entry:
Members: $4, Families: $6, Pensioners & Students: $2 and non-members: $5.

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MONDAY JUNE 22ND - FILM EVENING

Main feature on the evening will be Bing's 1936 feature:

ANYTHING GOES.

Details of the support will be announced later.

Please note the date now!

Remaining dates for 1987: August 10, October 12, December 7.

TRANSCRIBING BING

by VERN WESLEY TAYLOR

THE BEGINNING OF RECORDED NETWORK BROADCASTING

"I THOUGHT HE WAS A BLOODY GENIUS,
REALLY SOMETHING ELSE.....WITHOUT
JACK, I COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT."

(Murdo MacKenzie)

Tape did not burst upon the scene. It had, in fact, been around in one form or another for years. A Danish physicist invented magnetic recording in 1898 and others had sought marketable components, in a sporadic way, ever since.

"There were several different kinds," said Murdo, " and I think that I tried them all: Metal ribbon, metal wire, paper-tape, even film. None of them was better, after all, than records. Film is rather limited in many ways - more costly , special equipment. Editing with it is slow and never really good: little opportunity for enhancing and post-production, unless elaborate equipment is available everywhere it is to be used."

In addition, the record had become the method of choice for radio and it was sanctified by habit, with the machinery for using it in place everywhere and trained technicians easily available. The professional confidence in it was unshakable where it was being utilized. For a long time after tape came in, programming was still transferred to records for the actual broadcast.

While the show was in New York, MacKenzie was asked by the ABC to call upon a Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Ranger who had set up a recording service following his separation from the U.S. Army. It was said that he had a brand new device that worked altogether

differently from records. The network was so enthusiastic, plans were already being made for its use. "The idea sounded fascinating and I was happy to check it out," said Murdo. "I'd heard another outfit with such a machine but it didn't have anything to offer as far as I was concerned, also I'd tried that gosh-awful wire-recorder." He went to the demonstration of the Rangertone with strong hopes. "I gave it a good go but my old ear just couldn't find it much at all. When we got back home, I gave ABC my opinion but I'm sure they were going through with their plans anyway."

"Then, Jonny's agent, Frank Healy, found another lead, up in San Francisco. Frank knew a lot of people in and out of the business, and a friend of his, a motion-picture producer named Hugh King, ran into this company up there when he was having some film work done. King told them about our difficulties. I okayed it with Frank to arrange a demonstration of their machine in Los Angeles." What Murdo heard that evening was the cavalry galloping to the rescue. He said, "I think you could say Jack saved our stagecoach."

'Jack' was a tall, slender, comewhat serious man whose more complete name was John T. Mullin. Not long before, he had joined the small film-service company in San Francisco in an effort to market recordings on tape. At that moment, he was perhaps the only person in American with just what it took to succeed in the endeavour. It was the summer of 1947 that he and his partner, William Palmer lugged his tape-recorders into a station wagon and drove the 350 miles south to Los Angeles for his fateful date with Murdo. In England, not long before, he was still sttached to the Royal Air Force and, as Major Mullin of the U.S. Signal Corp, was deeply invoved in examining whatever German equipment was brought to their headquarters in Paris. The war was not quite over in Europe but the Germans were rapidly packing it in and retreating heimverts (homewards).

Late one night, to while away the lonely hours, he began searching the radio dials for more music after the BBC had gone to bed. Twisting the knobs, he picked up what was, unmistakably, a German transmitter beaming beautiful music to their troops. The signal was unusually loud and clear and before long it washed over him and filled the gloomy corners of the laboratory.

(1945 installation of a magnetophon in a German radio station.)
(Picture: John Mullin)

There was a long stretch of Rhine songs done by a large male chorus, a lot of Strauss and Lehar played by a full concert orchestra, a number of solo arias. He paused in his work. That kind of stuff at this time of night? Before he went into service, Mullin had worked in San Francisco for the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company, so his ear was attuned to such subtleties. This small perplex stuck in his memory and was available when he, later, in a small German radio installation outside Frankfurt went searching for the answer.

It lay in the form of a little black box and was staring up at him from a workbench. One of the British officers had asked him to check over a German magnetophon (A German term for magnetic recorder) which seemed to possess surprising fidelity of sound.

His careful inspection impressed him. Back in Paris, he examined others. Nothing like them had crossed his view before. They were sturdy and showed themselves to have well-built mechanical features. They looked much like the average machine with its revolving wheels, feeding tape across a recording/playback head, but they ran at a wonderfully constant speed, thus eliminating the bugbear known among the users as wow and flutter. More than this, he discovered two distinctly different kinds had been made, with this one being much the superior.

The tape medium used with neither metal ribbon nor paper strip but a plastic band coated or impregnated with some sort of iron oxide. When he rolled this past the playback head, he knew why Strauss and Lehar had sounded so good at three o'clock in the morning.

Two of the better models he sent home, one to the U.S. Signal Corp Laboratories and the other to the Department of Commerce in Washington D.C. Soon afterwards, he conducted another pair of the little machines to a handy table, and there he proceeded to re-arrange their innards to match their better cousins. He changed their direct current bias supply to alternating, thereby giving them what the others had, High Frequency Bias. Then he broke them down to small pieces and sent them to his home in San Francisco along with fifty reels of the strange tape. Reducing everything to small parcels was necessary to get them into the mail pouch, according to Army regulations; what could not fit into the pouch easily could not go stateside. They made a total of thirty-five bundles of perfectly legal war souvenirs. Surprisingly, they all arrivedsafe and sound. When Jack heard this, he began drawing regular breaths once more. The recording heads he thoughtfully carried homein his pocket.

He was mustered out of service early in 1946 and immediately reassembled his magnetophones. Painstakingly, he re-wired them following the original circuitry but using American parts. Also, he modified them somewhat by placing electronic pre-emphasis into the high-frequency record-circuit and likewise de-emphasis into the playback mode. (Later, when the first American models were built, this scheme of Mullin's was duplicated almost exactly.)

On his way home from the continent and from war's end, the major stopped off in New Jersey and renewed acquaintances with an old friend, Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Ranger. The Colonel had not heard of the magnetophon but became, as was Mullin before him, strongly intrigued by its possibilities. After Jack resumed his trip west, the colonel quickly returned to the war theatre, searching for little black tape-recorders and BASF tape...

Meanwhile, Jack went into partnership with Bill Palmer and very quickly put his machine to work filling orders for the industry. He took the trouble to learn for himself such esoteric things as background music and voice-tracks. Thanks to the magnetophons, he learned how to reduce the multiple recording problems, inherant in film production,to one single transfer to optical film. His quick-study propensities, coupled with a thorough knowledge of his growing craft, very quickly began earning money for Palmer and Company.

Jack Mullin is still as quick and energetic as he must have been that memorable day when Murdo heard the cavalry coming, the taping of the 37th Philco Radio Time broadcast. Thanks to his generosity, interviewing him about those dramatic times was an abiding pleasure. He makes us see, at last, how Bing Crosby got to be the one superstar granted the unique opportunity to change broadcasting forever.

"The most unforgettable moment in my life was the one when I stood before my tape-recorder and pressed the playback button for the first time in the presence of Bing Crosby, John Scott Trotter and Murdo MacKenzie. By invitation, I had been present with my colleague, Bill Palmer, to record the first radio show of the 1947-48 season in the NBC-ABC studio complex in Hollywood. And now we were to hear the results of our efforts and to be judged by perhaps the most critical ears in the world of radio recording."

This was another August evening and the first 'Philco' of the season was being produced for another October opening (1st October 1947) but this time it would be transcribed three times at once: Disc, magnetophon and Rangertone Tape Recorders. (Colonel Ranger had been lucky in his searches.) MacKenzie,in a careful ploy to forestall trouble with ABC, had made sure Ranger was on hand.

(John Mullin (left) and Murdo MacKenzie (right) with the two original magnetophons used to record Bing's 1947 shows at NBC (Picture: John Mullin)

"The tape came up to speed," Mullin continues, "then, Opening theme, Crosby: BLUE OF THE NIGHT. Applause. Introductory patter: Crosby and Carpenter. Song - Crosby: MY HEART IS A HOBO. Applause. Murdo MacKenzie signaled me to 'cut'. I pressed the 'stop' button. There was surely no more than two seconds of silence, which seemed like an eternity to me, and then a shower of compliments. One small machine, one of a pair, side by side on a makeshift table, arranged to record and reproduce magnetic tape with such remarkable fidelity, in a listening demonstration lasting less than five minutes, had upset the entire future of sound recording in this country."

The ex-colonel had had an equal chance to prove his own, if interestingly named magnetophons but he had not done his homework on them and

so the ex-major won the day. For Murdo, the search was over (though ABC still pursued their first enthusiasms for Rangertones until he, once again, went to Bing...) The turntable editing horror, the dubs of dubs, the copies of copies, the aluminium and glass and shellac and vinyl cartwheels were behind him forever. And, while the ABC engineers would continue to cling to the ET's for a little longer as broadcast masters, he knew his troubles were through. Neither would there be another 'demo' of machinery. Webcor, Brush Soundmirror, Rangertone - all could be forgotten. Well perhaps...

As for the broadcast itself, it hit its stride at last. Not only were the biggest stars and the best songs heard week after week, but the writing had tightened up, too. It was crisper and funnier. The girlsingers kept changing, if any were heard at all, but Peggy Lee, a throaty, strong-voiced sexy-sounding type, ultimately made more appearances with Bing than any of the others. Lina Romay had gone but she was walking over at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and doing other radio work and doubtless gave little thought to her old job.

This was the era of the 'gem' shows for Crosby; well put together programmes, each a thing unto itself. So, while Lena and Skitch and even the black quartet, the Charioteers were no longer gracing the series, it went on to even greater critical audience acceptance and popularity. It also sold millions of radios and phonographs, the latest models being regularly introduced by the mellifluous voice of the resident announcer, Ken Carpenter, reporting his sage advice in a clever, comfortable flow of commercial good cheer.

The 'Minstrel Show' (2nd April 1947), even though it was a disc-recorded airing, was a case in point. The guests, diverse as can be imagined (Al Jolson and John Charles Thomas - the great concert baritone), nevertheless worked flawlessly with Bing in a sketch running nearly the whole half-hour. It came to be considered a classic of its kind and was paid the ultimate compliment of being imitated.

As for the new transcribing method, this rapidly became very good indeed, with the edits disappearing entirely. Murdo, though, did not find his troubles ended but instead discovered new frets to

marry himself with. He had learned the lessons of delegating authority, probably from the master himself, Bing, but he still kept everything under constant scrutiny.

The Enterprises found Jack Mullin a place to do his work, an old disused (because no longer needed, thanks to the advent of tape) standby studio in the ABC section of the building, its waiting piano and microphone no longer required. "I installed my machines," he said, "moved in a sofa and a couple of chairs and it became a delightful place to work." As so many others had done, he discovered working with Murdo both exacting and exciting. Crosby, himself, stated it best (in a much later interview): "He (MacKenzie) is a hard-working man but he is also a nice man to know because he can be a good friend."

"Murdo was a perfectionist", Mullin said, "had his finger in everything and always knew what he was doing. Whatever I did on the show, he had to approve; all my work was done under his direction. Philco and ABC had put it all on his shoulders because they thought of him as the most technically-minded among them all. However, Murdo was, basically, a technical person, but he had the responsibility of getting the answers. His technical background was strictly limited to the training he received as a sound engineer - a Mixer.

His job after he and Bing left Kraft was to bring all the different factors together. He had to see to it, whenever there was a show day, wherever they were, to find a studio and hire and engineer. He specified the various kinds of microphones to be used and supervised the set-up (the stage). He had to have it all ready to go when Bing and the others walked out to do their work. That credit line he had at the end of the show was a very true statement, because Bill wrote it and Murdo did the rest. He was so involved, so dedicated, he could actually feel terrible if Bing did not come off with a good sound to his songs or a good flow to his dialogue. He worked all the time to make sure these things happened, and we - all the rest of us, especially Bing himself - counted on him to do it. It got to be our habit: We would do our jobs and Murdo would put it all together."

What began now was a natural consequence of the debate on 'Live-Verses-Canned-Entertainment'. As the motion-picture editor had

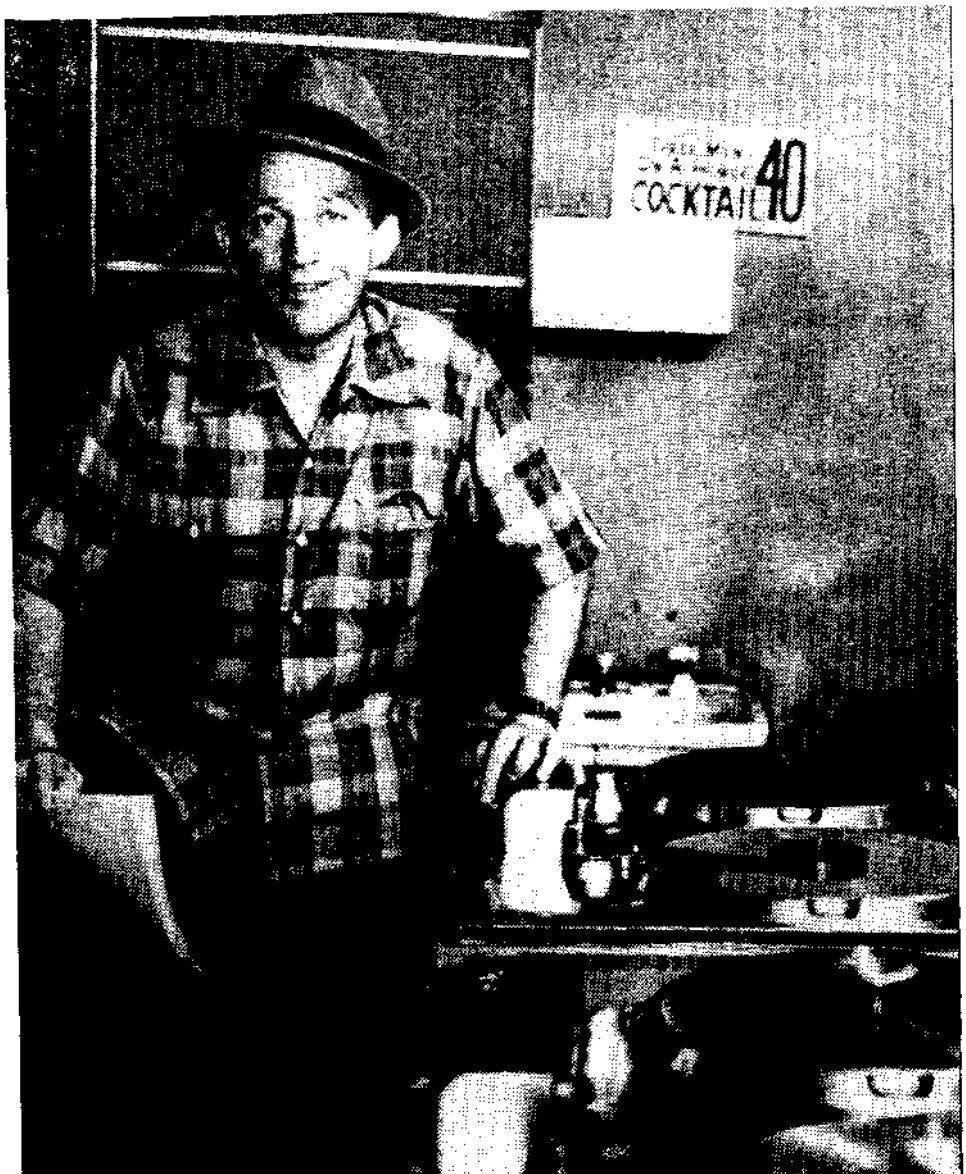
(Bing and Jack Mullin listening to playback of a show from one of the first two Ampex machines. Photo: John Mullin)

become a dire necessity when that medium's development had stalled early in the century as mere photographed stage shows, radio editing had likewise become inescapable. The industry insiders were heavily responsible for what was about to take place. They had been the loudest and most critical in resisting the inevitable change and the most severe in condemning it when, through Bing Crosby, it arrived. MacKenzie, who had the most responsibility in it, suffered the most, perhaps, but change as he most consciously desired it, was at hand and with a vengence he, most of all, could appreciate.

Mullin, a natural tinkerer type of inventor, began to use his talents in developing the life-like recordings of the new Philco Show. His first priority was finding new tape as well as new recorders. Ranger, still very much interested in the game, assured him that he had just about perfected a serviceable substitute for Mullin's dwindling supply of the BASF tape. Nothing came of this, however, and Jack was forced to look elsewhere. He had also promised the Enterprises he would locate more recorders as well as tape, so he could not afford to delay.

In a stroke of luck, he was contacted by representatives of the Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company (3M) of St Paul, Minnesota. They had heard about the magnetophons and made an offer to use their immense resources to try and duplicate the German tape. Very soon - almost by accident - they discovered an acceptable formulation for iron oxide coating. It turned out to be from a familiar source. "It was a material," wrote Mullin, "which we did not recognize at the time, a form of the oxide used in ordinaty red barn paint." Ultimately, 3M labeled their new tape as Type 111, and it became America's first mass-produced magnetic tape.

Meanwhile , yet another small company, with but half-a-dozen employees, located up on San Francisco peninsula, was interested in making tape-recorders. During the war, they had manufactured small electric motors for use in aircraft. The head of this group was a man with the Russian-sounding name of A.M. Pontiatoff. He had coupled his initials with the letters EX (for excellence) and named the company AMPEX. AMPEX told Jack they greatly desired to make high-quality tape audio-machinery. Impressed with their



(Bing with the two special "portable" Ampex machines.)
(Photo: [illegible])

obvious sincerity and probably grateful for their sudden appearance, it was not long before he had them involved in developing just what he had in mind. "I often took short trips up there, to help them with their design and to give them practical tips on the human engineering aspects gleaned from my constant work with the German models."

It was becoming apparent that his promise to the Enterprises would come true. "Ampex's six men were all very capable and dedicated to one objective: To design and produce a fine tape-recorder based on the German original but not necessarily a Chinese copy of it. We had great faith in what they were accomplishing, but since they had sunk all their resources into the work, they were urgently in need of money." Thanks to Bing, his name and some Enterprises money, a willing bank was found. Soon thereafter, the first saleable Ampex (Model 200) was brought into the world. In April of 1948, Mullin was presented with the first two and the tired little magnetophons were cleaned up and put to bed, their historic and heroic duties done.

These very first Ampex's "were beautiful things to see," said Jack, "but they were large and cumbersome, so they made me two portable units in which the original cabinets were each split into two beautifully finished oak cases. I used these for the duration of my association with the Bing Crosby show."

By this time, he had recorded twenty-six Philco programmes, including rehearsals and it can be easily imagined how worked-over and often spliced the BASF fifty rolls had become! Along the way, during those eight months, other things were happening of course. "There were no text books on editing with tape, so I had to develop my own techniques. Splicing I learned to do by hand." Mackenzie remembered some of those techniques. "He would hold up the two tape ends at about eye level and snip them off at an angle, then he would apply a little piece of cellophane tape to them. He got to be so quick at it that it was something to see. Also, he learned how to make a pretty good fade whenever the signal ended appruptly, by thinning down, narrowing the tape width." Other tell-tale signs were overcome electronically which gave the broadcasts their astonishing 'actuality', their seemingly live qualities.

(John Mullin in San Francisco recording Crosby Show, March 2nd, 1950. Model 200 Ampex left, model 300 right.)
(Photo: John Mullin)

Every day, Jack worked and re-worked the show and thus developed many subtle tricks, but never a simple or a quick job. "It took me about a week to put the show together after Bing performed it."

Other details proved equally interesting. "Crosby didn't always know his songs very well and he might start one and blow it. John Scott would play the tune on the piano, then when Bing got it, he would record two or three takes. In the evening, he did the whole show before an audience. If he muffed a song then, the audience would always love it, thinking that it was very funny, but we would have to remove the show version and insert one of the rehersal takes. Sometimes if he was having fun with the song and not really working at it, we might have to make it up out of two or three parts. This ad-lib way of tape-editing is commonplace nowadays but it was all new then."

Familiarity breeds cunning invention, so it was not long before the inserts became very sophosticated indeed. "One time, Bob Burns was on and he threw in a few of his folksy farm stories, which were certainly not in Morrow's script. They were slightly off-colour and got enormous laughs. We could not use the jokes of course but Bill asked us to save the laughs and, a couple of weeks later, we tacked them onto some not-so-funny jokes by someone else. Those big guffaws sounded ridiculous following such corny jokes, but the laugh track was born. It was pretty tricky because we didn't yet have a way of fading them in or out."

Later on, even individual words could be replaced, under the right circumstances. "There was a time when Bing was ad-libbing with Bob Hope (Chesterfield series). Hope loved to throw Bill's script out into the audience and say, 'Let's go on from here without that.' Crosby didn't like this very much but they made a good show of it." In that broadcast, Hope makes reference to Lucky Strike cigarettes "and the sponsor was compaining that they had left the air. We promised that the offending name would be removed."

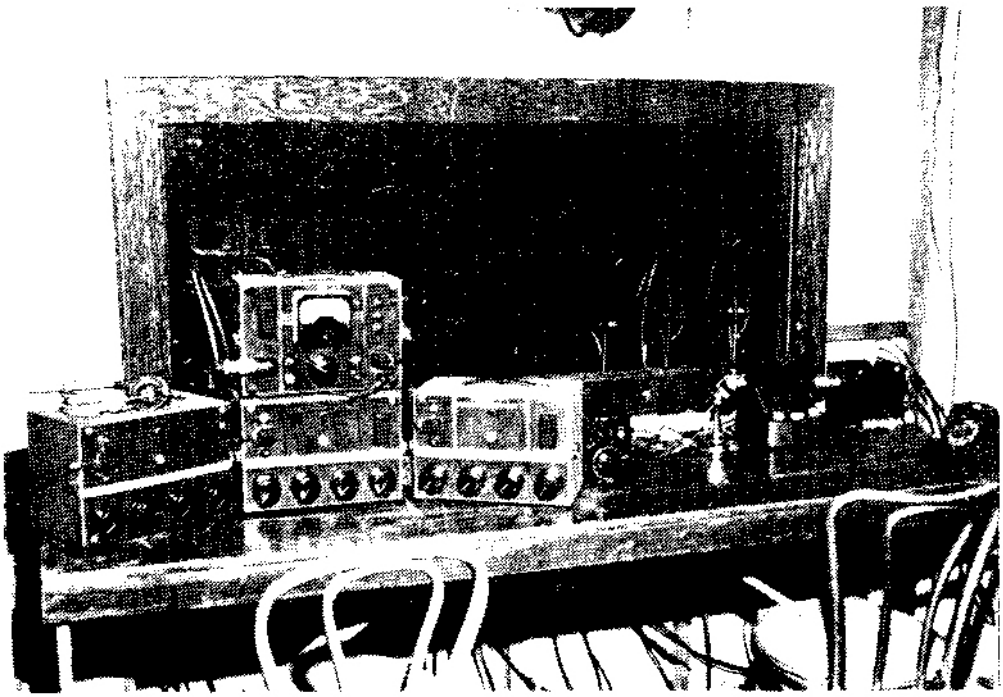
Mullin was definitely writing his own text book but the process forced enormous and frightening changes on them. The first Ampex's lacked flanged reels, instead they used turntable-style revolving plates, with the tape held in place around a hub. They whirled at 30 inches a second and all too often, the tape rolled up and off the hubs, casting itself in twisted loops onto the floor, creating instant chaos.

"Terrible!", Murdo said, "Whenever it jumped off the machine, we really had trouble. Sometimes we'd have to open the door to untangle it. There would be our show - the only copy we had - stretched up and down the hall, with the guys, very gently and very slowly, straightening it out. I tell you, I held my breath, I do believe, for minutes at a time, watching it get wound back on the machine. To this day, I don't see how we stood it all. Jack really had lots and lots of patience."

(Control booth, San Francisco 1950. Left: Paul Smith - engineer. Right: Norman Dewes - mixer. Photo: Norman Dewes)

Despite the occasional near-disaster, MacKenzie knew that tape was the best thing that had ever happened to the show. It's influence extended beyond the mechanical to the psychological. He knew, for example, of its salubrious effect on the performers, especially Bing and the guest stars. Crosby's carefully controlled instincts for uninhibited behaviour were allowed to relax a little before a microphone that was conducting everything he said, not out into the world, but safely onto recording tape where it would be selectively 'adjusted'. This realization produced such euphoria that the actual airings, edited thought they might be, conveyed a heightened sense of fun which the listener apprehended. As for the guests, Murdo said, "They were better on tape, no doubt about it. Back in the live show days there were lots of them you could never, never get to come onto do any kind of comedy at all. They were terrified of appearing ludicrous to their fans. You just couldn't pay them enough; they thought they would ruin their movie or stage careers. With tape, though, you could say, "Look, just come on with us and have a ball. If you make a mistake, don't worry about it. We'll play it back for you and if you like it, we'll leave it in. If you don't like it, we can always do it over, as many times as you like." Interestingly, Gary Cooper, who was known for his reluctance to do serious things on radio and despite the fact that he was a very good, longtime friend of Crosby's (Bing had named his firstborn after him), made no appearances on a Bing show until it was recorded. Then he sounded more convincing and relaxed than he ever had before, even singing three songs with Crosby.

In regard to this, Murdo spoke of lost treasures. "Al Jolson, as you know, worked a lot with Bing. Well, they were absolutely hilarious together. With Jolie always trying to outdo Bing, there were lots of goofs and blow-ups. As a matter of fact, I don't think we ever had anybody that didn't do something unusable. I kept all those rehersals and finished shows in my home where I could keep an eye on them, all safely packed away - hundreds of reels. Talk about 'collector's items', they were filled with hours and hours of simply great stuff: Ad-libs, parodies, dumbell



(Looking outwards from the same control booth shown on page 18.)
(Photo: Norman Dewes)

goofs, naughty words and even music by the nicest people with the biggest names in show business. Yet, they always managed to calm down enough to provide enough material for a good show every time. If they didn't, we kept after them until they did!

Those audiences, quite possibly, were the happiest people that ever filled a public auditorium. "We worked in a theatre that had a five to six hundred seat capacity, and they'd be falling out in the aisles and actually rolling around, holding their sides, laughing. They'd look at one another and laugh even more. It would get so noisy you'd hear it in your ears long afterwards. It was true, live entertainment, taped, and it was marvellous. But they are all gone now, those tapes. They burned up with my home, in Malibu, along with everything else we owned."

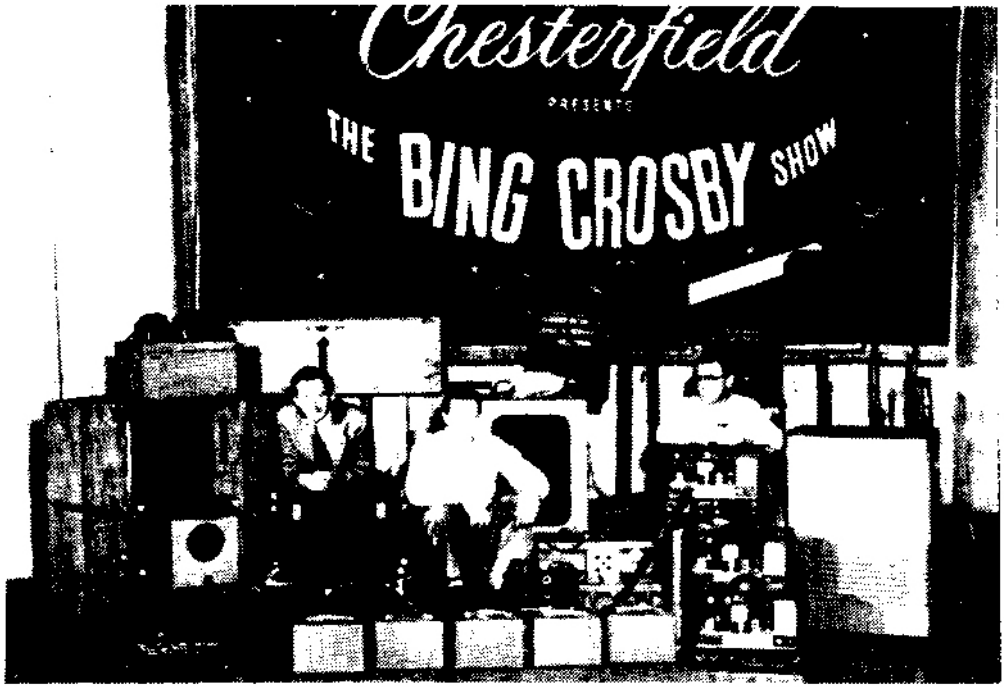
(Standard Crosby show set-up, March 2nd, 1950. Photo: Norman Dewes)

Mullin designed and had built a special tape-mixing console that greatly simplified the work. Seamless, tight editing thus became a genuine science, especially when sound-on-sound and recorded attenuation came in, making fades easily possible. All this and more was to come to perfection after Jack ceased working with Murdo as tape-editor. But before this took place, sweet revenge was to come to Bing in the form of a selling campaign staged by members of the crew. The year 1948 saw Bing Crosby Enterprises add a sales section to their growing activities. Frank Healy was appointed head of a division to sell Ampex products. A professional sales pitch was worked out and Murdo, Jack and some of the others turned themselves into salesmen, conducting demonstrations to important clients. And Ampex, though they enlarged their personnel and plant, were barely able to keep up with the demand.

Months had gone by since ABC gave up the struggle. MacKenzie's implacable insistance on getting what he wanted had finally convinced them that Bing listened to Murdo first and ABC second - if at all. They bought the first dozen Ampex's off the assembly-line. Thereafter, the sale-team sold recorders to all of their detractors. NBC and CBS placed eager orders, Mutual, DonLee West Coast Network and innumerable independants and affiliate stations followed. That Summer, Mullin hit the road and sold blocks of Ampexes to Capitol and Decca Records in New York. He was given a new title, Chief Engineer of the Electronics Division of Crosby Enterprises. Murdo, likewise sold Ampex machines all over town. Eventually, ABC even got in the act (all they ever wanted in the first place) and were given the eastern areas of the USA as their exclusive sales territory. The Enterprises retained the more lucrative West Coast until they decided to get out of the sales-business.

"As I look back on it now", Jack wrote many years later, "it seems curious that a number of vital factors, each essential to the success of the whole, came together simultaneously. First the magnetophon's superiority over any other machine in the entire country; second, the need for such apparatus by such a prominent person as Bing Crosby; third, a small but capable group of people like AMPEX with the determination to make the world's finest tape recorders; and fourth, the 3M Company with faith in magnetic tape and anxious to see the market for it come to fruition."

He was to go on, with Bing's organization funding him, experimenting and inventing even more important machinery for the entertainment media and other fields of communication: Instrumentation Telemetry and Recording for the military was developed by him on the eve of the Korean conflict, the Flutter Compensator, which greatly enhanced all recording, and videotape, which replaced film (Kinetoscope) for the new television industry, allowing it the same impetus audio-tape had given radio. Additionally, he perfected other innovations, including a near-miss on the videocassette which is presently revolutionizing all of entertainment; only his timing in getting his model to market prevented his success. But he had success enough to give him a place forever as one of the champions in his chosen field.



(Left: John Mullin, centre: Norman Dewes, right: Tom Edwards)
(Photo: Norman Dewes)

His final Crosby show was for June 18, 1951 (Chesterfield). By then, he was using Ampex Model 300, the most famous one produced. It contained sprocketed reels, which gave his successor the serene security of knowing he would never have to open the hall door to edit the Bing Crosby programme! By the middle of 1956, Crosby divested himself of his electronics business and Frank Healy, along with Jack were ultimately to go to work for the 3M Company, as a separate unit, the MINCOM Division.

Like so very many others, Mullin speaks with a strong appreciation of what Bing Crosby did for him; his memories are a tribute to the singer.

(TO BE CONCLUDED NEXT ISSUE)

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TWO NEW BOOKS ON BING
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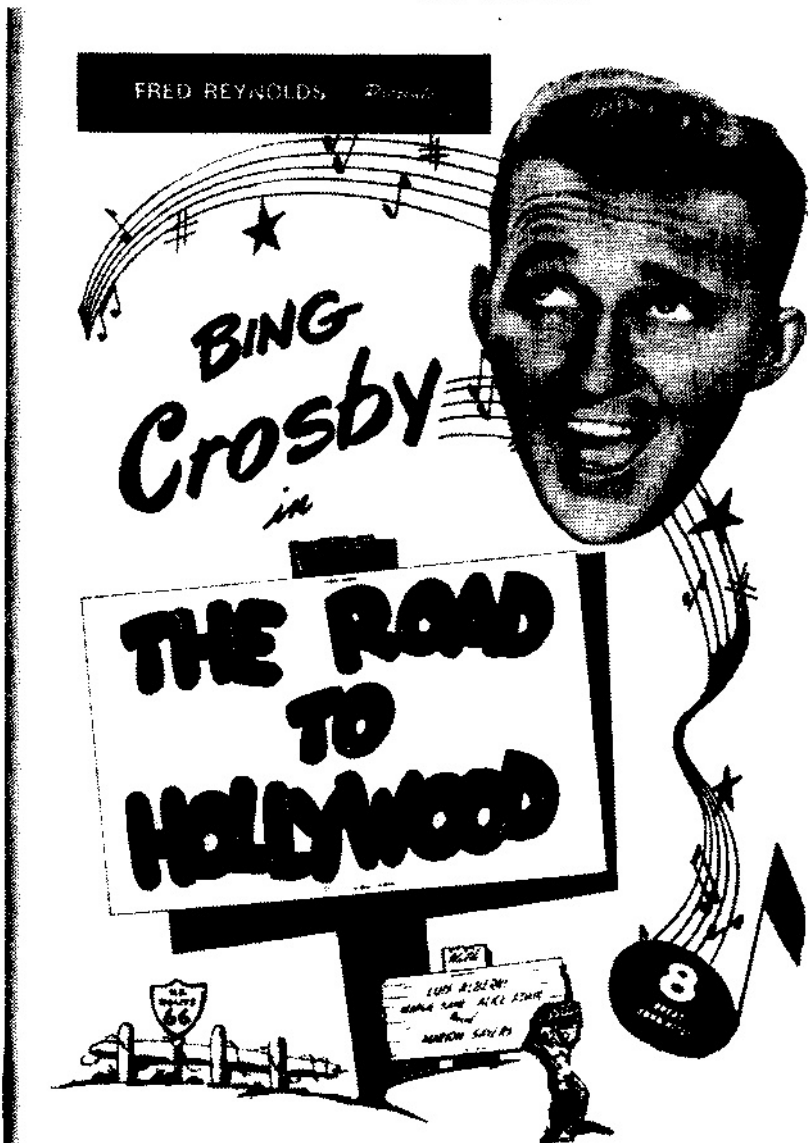

TWO NEW BOOKS ON BING:

1. "THE ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD"

We first warned you about this book (cover previous page) about a year ago. Unfortunately, it was only sold on a subscription basis, that is, you had to order it prior to publication and pay a deposit to secure your copy.

Privately published in England, "The Road to Bing Crosby" by Fred Reynolds is a revised and updated edition of a book that was first issued in the very early 1970's. The first edition was an 'amateur' job, printed by duplicator on A4 size paper and bound in a blue paper cover.

However, this new printing is a fully-professional effort with a hard cover and even a dust jacket. It lists every film appearance made by Bing from 1929 to 1974 and discusses each plot in detail. Illustrated throughout with stills from the films, it is by far the most comprehensive book ever issued on Bing's film career. Included also are Bing's TV movies, unrealized projects, cartoons and imitations, box offices successes and non-active appearances.

To the best of my knowledge, no spare copies of the book are available. Don't say we didn't warn you!

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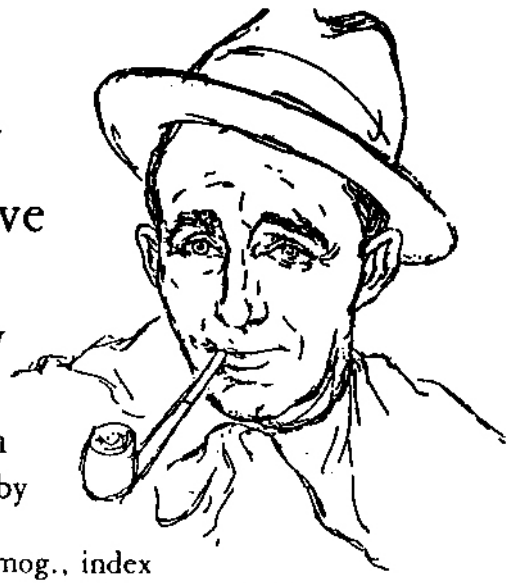
2. BING CROSBY - A Comprehensive Discography and Filmography

Due out in April, this fascinating new book is the work of U.S. member Tim Morgereth. A detailed rundown of the book appears on the opposite page.

Orders are being taken now and if you are interested, we suggest that you place your order now. The book costs a hefty U.S. $45.00 a copy, and you can secure yours by writing to: Ms Brenda Russell,
Promotion Assistant
McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers
Box 611
Jefferson, NC 28640
U.S.A.



Bing Crosby
A Comprehensive Discography and Filmography

Compiled by
Timothy A. Morgereth
Foreword by Kathryn Crosby
[416]pp. LC 85-43582
60 photos., notes, discog., filmog., index
ISBN 0-89950-210-5 $45 library binding 1987

The definitive compilation of facts and figures tracing the career of Harry Lillis Crosby from his start with the monolithic Paul Whiteman orchestra through a long, successful career (to 1956) that produced over 1,000 commercial recordings, 58 feature length films, and endless hours of enjoyment.

The first section is a listing, in chronological order, of all known 78 r.p.m. recordings from the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, South Africa, and Canada. The second section lists chronologically all radio appearances, arranged by sponsor (Chesterfield, Woodbury Soap, General Electric, etc.) with song titles and guest artists. The final section lists all film appearances with credits, song title, and running times (correcting previous errors and deletions).

Timothy A. Morgereth, of Baltimore, is a leading collector of Bing Crosby records, books, sheet music, radio, and films.

High Society

Remember *High Society*? Remember *The Philadelphia Story*? They're back, melded into one show – and the star is 23-year-old Natasha Richardson, daughter of the fiery Vanessa Redgrave.

TRACY SAMANTHA LORD, they're playing your song ... again, and it's bringing back memories of Bing Crosby singing it to Grace Kelly all those years ago.

But this year the beautiful star of *High Society* is Natasha Richardson, daughter of Vanessa Redgrave.

She plays Tracy Samantha Lord, the haughty heiress created first by Katharine Hepburn in *The Philadelphia Story* and then by Grace Kelly in the MGM musical classic, *High Society*.

Tracy's character has become indelibly associated with Kelly and Hepburn in much the same way the song, *I Love You Samantha*, is associated with the musical.

Play the role and there is the risk of offending the sensibilities of those who believe that Kelly and the ice princess who finds humility and true love are one. You can get burned when you tamper with a legend.

Natasha doesn't even get singed.

When she takes the stage at Leicester's Haymarket Theatre, with fellow stars Trevor Eve in the Bing Crosby-Cary Grant role, Stephen Rea as the Frank Sinatra-James Stewart reporter and Angela Richards as the sidekick photographer, she has such an easy style and sense of elegance, it's as if the part had been written just for her.

But the 23-year-old actress acknowledges her debt to Hepburn and Kelly.

"I had the videos of the *Philadelphia Story* and *High Society* and I watched them both, although I had seen the films before many times on television.

"It's no good ignoring their performances. After all, Philip Barry wrote *Philadelphia Story* for Hepburn on stage and then she recreated Tracy on film. In fact I hope I've got

So what director Richard Eyre, the man who staged the National Theatre's much lauded *Guys and Dolls*, decided to do was marry Barry's *Philadelphia Story* with Porter's numbers. Memorable ones like *Who Wants To Be A* Millionaire, Little One and *High Society*.

As well as the seven classic *High Society* songs, the Cole

something of her in this production.

"I've certainly got a few tips from both of them — after watching the films, that is," Natasha said as we sat in an empty auditorium at the Haymarket.

"Although I've watched them, it must be remembered that I'm not playing them."

When *High Society* was released in 1956 the star combination of Crosby, Kelly and Sinatra was a hit, but many felt that apart from Cole Porter's sparkling songs, the film was a dud.

Porter estate have allowed Eyre to use other Porter gems, such as *Hey, Good Lookin'* and *In The Still Of The Night*.

Eyre hired his leading actors because they could "act and sing". Natasha, however, admits: "I'm still working on the singing".

"I've had extensive singing lessons. For six weeks before I even started rehearsals I was in London getting the voice ready."

Ian Adam, the man who helped Michael Crawford and Sarah Brightman achieve such rave reviews for their singing in

Phantom Of The Opera, worked with her.

"Ian gives such incredible confidence. He made me feel I could go through with it all. And I've always wanted to do a musical and was so knocked out to be considered.

"But, believe me, I've never worked so hard in my life. The singing, the dancing, and everything else, it has all been so frenzied, but all to such a good end.

"Luckily I did some ballet as a child and some movement when I was at the Central School of Speech and Drama. Now I can tap, a little, and dance jazz and ballroom.

"When I put on that ball dress," she says with feeling, "it makes me feel a million dollars, I love it and it is difficult not to feel glittering and glamorous."

Indeed so touching and stylish is her portrayal of Tracy Lord, the girl who finds all human imperfection unforgivable, that one not only sheds the memory of Hepburn and Kelly, but the shackles of being a Redgrave.

Her partner on stage, Trevor Eve, finds her "joy" to work with.

"She's a wonderful actress and she has been terrific', he says.

Natasha said: "I needed to do this musical, especially after *Gothic*."

We had both attended a preview recently of Ken Russell's new picture, where Natasha portrays Mary Shelley. The film takes a shocking, gory look how Shelley formulated her horror classic, *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus*.

"It was pretty harrowing to work on, it completely drained me," Natasha said.

All that is behind her now — at least until the film opens in London in February.

"*High Society* is all I'm concentrating on now. I want to get it right. Richard Eyre is calling it a work in progress, so we have a lot to do before London.'

When I saw the show in Leicester "the work in progress" was progressing very well. After all, this was the same place that turned to the smash hit *Me And My Girl*, which is now taking a fortune every night in London and on Broadway. The pattern should be repeated at the Victoria Palace from February.

Now *Me And My Girl* and *Phantom Of The Opera* have some competition.

What's more, so does Vanessa Redgrave.

The Herald, Dec. 4, 1986

BITS 'N' PIECES

* CAPTION COMPETITION - WE HAVE A WINNER!

Thank you to all those members who sent in entries to our competition. Among the best entries for what Bing is really saying were -

Clyde Wilson: "That's the last time I work with Carole Lombard!" and "You're a sweet little headache".

Ted Paradissis: "How do you expect me to sail through those sound waves when I can't 'ear at all?" and "This isn't what I meant when I said I prefer to sing with a band!"

Graham Pascoe: "I'll swab the decks with Hope if he makes a crack about my halo slipping!"

However, the winning entry came from Peter de Ryk of Coburg Victoria:

"WHY CAN'T THEY USE SOME QUICK-DRYING GLUE?"

Congratulations Peter. Your copy of the rare Cazenovia College pressing of "High Hopes" should arrive about the same time as this magazine.

* In addition to the 8-track cartridge listing that Colin Pugh has compiled for the Crosby Voice, there is also a listing he has prepared of Bing's cassette issues. However, there are no Australian titles listed, and before we publish the list, I would like to add as many local issues as possible. If you have any commercial Crosby cassettes, could you please let us know THE TITLE, LABEL, CATALOGUE NUMBER, plus anything else you think interesting. Doesn't matter if the same titles were issued overseas, if your tape reads "Made in Australia, we'd like to know about it. Please send all details to the club address.

* In South Australia, patrons to the West Lakes Shopping Centre were so unhappy with the music being played over the P.A. system that they requested Bing Crosby! The management took notice and all Christmas, Bing was heard at regular intervals.

NEW RELEASES

BING ON COMPACT DISC - OUT AT LAST!

We first mentioned that these two CD's were planned by MCA in the USA, midway through last year, and thanks to Mark Scrimger we now have copies. The discs are "BING CROSBY SINGS AGAIN" (MCAD-5764) and "BING CROSBY SINGS CHRISTMAS SONGS" (MCAD-5765). Quality is absolutely sensational. No echo, no fake stereo - just pure sound as recorded. Like listening to mint 78's, only better. Each disc includes an unissued Crosby track as a bonus. The contents of the first:

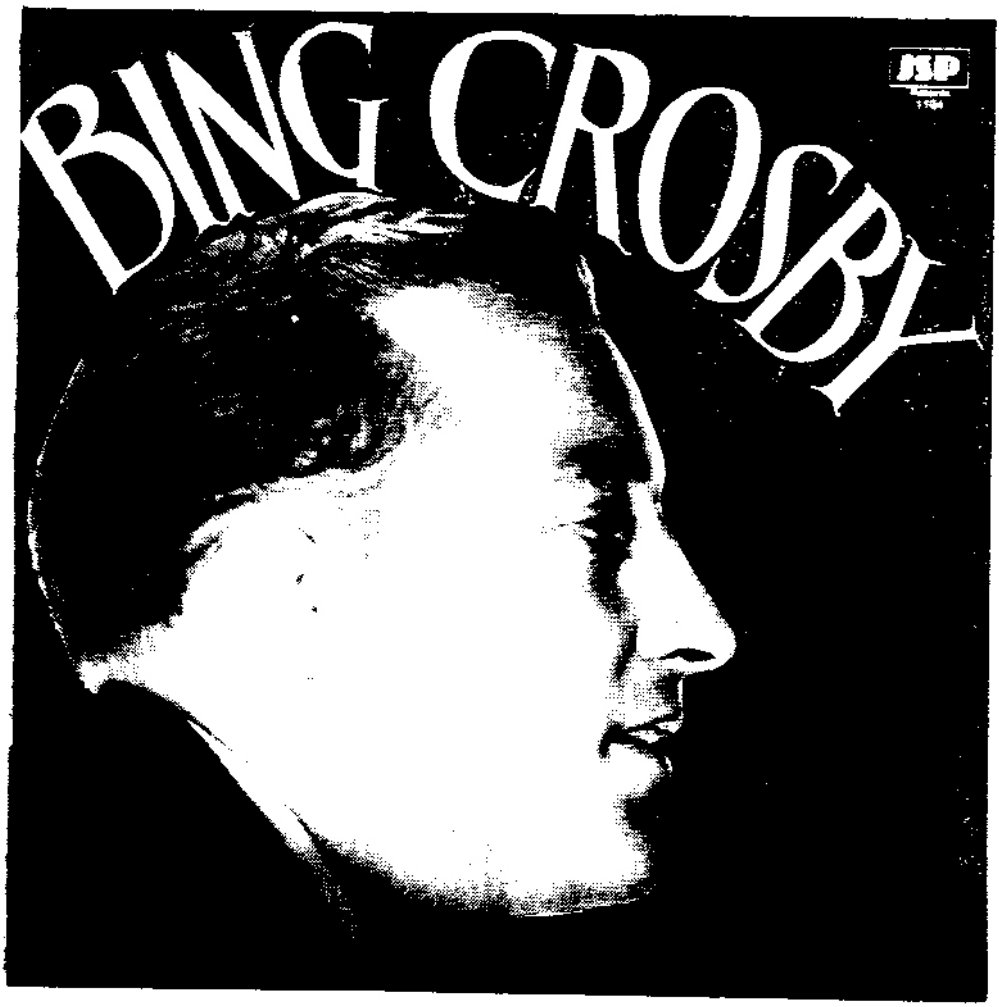
The Ol' spring fever (unissued), Dear hearts and gentle people, Beyond the reef, Swinging on a star, Where the blue of the night (1931), I'm an old cowhand, Welcome to my dream, Smarty, Moonlight becomes you, What's new, I'm through with love (1931), Blue skies, Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, You are too beautiful, I kiss your hand madame, Now is the hour. The second disc: White Xmas, Silent night, It's beginning to look a lot like Xmas, God rest ye merry gentlemen, Faith of our fathers, I'll be home for Xmas, Xmas in Killarney, The first noel, You're all I want for Xmas, Xmas carols (pts 1 & 2), The Xmas song, Greetings to Decca employees - 1940 (private issue only).

Unfortunately, these CD's are not yet available in Australia but given Bing's popularity here, we hope that it would only be a matter of time. And let's hope that there are more to come!

BING CROSBY IN THE THIRTIES - VOLS 1,2 & 3 - JSP 1076, 1084 & 1104.

Considering that Bing's KMH songs have been extensively covered on LP in the past few years, you may wonder why the same material is

being reissued in the U.K. However, the sound in this case has had the magic touch of recording engineer John R.T.Davies and so these old transcriptions have never sounded better. I'm not sure, but the tracks appear to cover every KMH song available,in chronological order, so there is another reason to get these records. As an additional bonus, Volume 1 contains the 1932 Paramount publicity recordings of 'Please' and 'Here Lies Love'.



All three records are enhanced by excellent cover notes by Geoff Milne - a man who has had long connections with Bing in the U.K., dating back to the 1960's Ace Of Hearts re-issues and perhaps even longer. It is presumed that further issues will be forthcoming.

B.C. - T.V. (Bing on the Box) - Limited Edition CIub - JGB 1007

The first LP I've ever seen featuring Crosby tracks from 1960's television. Contents: I can't believe that you're in love with me, Make me believe, Save your sorrow, Girl talk, Name, Dream, I left my heart in San Francisco, Medley with Peggy Lee, Beautiful things, Sunrise sunset, Guess who, They all laughed, mountain greenery, Blue Room, That face, Funny face, Flattery will get you nowhere, Medley with Dinah Shore, Let the restof the world go by, Let's be going our way.

TV sound in the 60's was never brilliant, but the compilers have done the best that they can. We've purchased a few copies for club members - five to be sold by mail, five to be sold at our next meeting. First come, first served in both cases and only one to a customer. If you'd like to order one by mail the cost will be $15 including postage. If all mail copies are sold, your payment will be returned. Write now! They won't last long.

JUST FOR FUN - TAKE 2 - Broadway Intermission - BR 138 (Vol 8)

From America comes news of this new compilation of private recordings, fluffs, rehersals, etc from Broadway International.

Contents: Dialogue between Bing and Ken Carpenter (1950 broadcast), I'm gonna sit right down and write myself a letter/Wake up and Live, Three letters (private 1936 record), Take my heart (private 1936 record), Sweet is the word for yuou (fluff), Iowa (takes 1,2,3 & 4 from a radio rehersal), Seventh Air Force Tribute (1945 broadcast), Apalachacola (fluff), Too late now (1947 radio), Civilization (1947 radio), Dialogue with Claudette Colbert, Philco commercial (fluff), How ya gonna keep him down on the farm (private), Morgan, Melancholie (rejected), Start all over again (Take 2) and Roxie (takes 1,2 & 3) with Fred Astire (1975), That's what life is all about (over-dub).

Copies are available from Stan Hester, PO Box 244, Milford, Michigan 48042, USA.

BR 139 which features a collection of commercial records from the twenties to the fifties should also be available soon. Ask for details

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HOUSE FULL

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'House Full' - I read the sign in sheer dismay
Those dreaded words confirmed my hidden fears
'House full' - disgruntled patrons turned away
But I just stood there on the verge of tears
And then I caught a glimpse and nearly died
Of all those lucky people safe inside.

T'was in the town of Beechworth years ago
When I was just fifteen and full of cheek
Our way of life back then was rather slow
And picture show was held just once a week
And so when 'Going My Way' came to town
That 'House Full' sign brought on my anxious frown.

For years I'd loved to hear Bing Crosby croon
Since one night at the tender age of nine
I'd sat enthralled at 'Paris Honeymoon'
And now - oh curses on that 'House Full' sign
Though commonsense decreed I should retreat
I vowed, fair means or foul, to gain a seat.

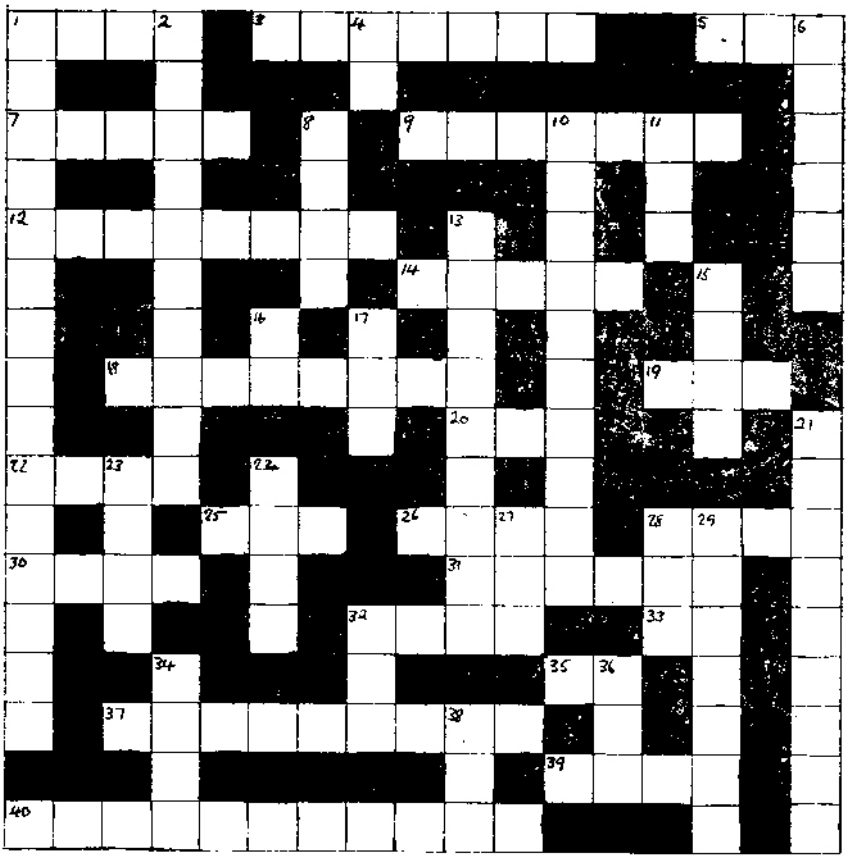
Now all the local urchins of the town
Were seated near the screen down on the floor
At interval an usher hurried down
Rel;eased the bolt and opened wide the door
And as those kids came whooping down the lane
I knew my patience hadn't been in vain.

'House Full' - and yet I didn't have a care
You couldn't buy a seat for love or quids
Yet, cunning little rogue, I was aware
They didn't offer passouts to those kids
And as they dimmed the lights and rang the bell
I crouched and with those kids sneaked through as well.

I made it past the usher at the door
And whispered "Kids - move up and make some room"
And crowded midst those urchins on the floor
I tingled with excitement in the gloom
So close I could have touched the silver screen
I close my eyes and picture yet that scene.

Well forty years and more have come and gone
And Bing, our dear old Bing has passed away
Though he's no longer here his voice lives on
Though young folk find him kind of square today
But I remember when he wore the crown
When 'Going My Way' came to Beechworth Town.

Copyright Clem Parkinson, 1986.



CROSS(BY)WORD No 2 - by Diana McKie

ACROSS

1. Himself
3. Co star and best pal
5. ..... & Rainger song team
7. Second wife's name
9. Second wife
12. Road Movie
14. First wife

18 across + 16 down + 28 across:
.... A .... (song)
19. ... Through The Day
20. ...thing Goes
22. .... To Remember
25. We all had a little ... when Bing died.
26. Talk of the ....
28. (See 18 across)
30. Eddie .... played guitar
31. One of the Rhythm Boys
32. Bing's fans are .... on him
33. Love to Live .. Loveland
35. Sunday, Monday .. Always
36 across + 32 down:
Announcer on Bing's shows
39. (See 24 down)
40. The .... co-starred Bing with Grace Kelly and William Holden.

DOWN

1..... .. .. Film in which Bing portrayed a clarinet player.
2. Bing won an Oscar for his role in this film
4. .. The Light Of The Silvery Moon
6. In which state of the USA did Bing own a ranch?
8. A Connecticut Yankee in .... Arthur's Court
10. White Christmas originally came from this movie.
11. Just for ...
13. Road Movie
15. Road movie
16. (See 18 across)
17. Bing called this his 'rug'
21. Studio where Bing made most of his movies
23. .... You Sinners
24 down + 39 across:
Hit song from High Society
27. In Road films, Bing would always ... the girl
28. Bing ... his heart on a show biz career early
29. John Scott .....
32. (See 36 across)
34. Song Of The ....
36. Road Movie
38. Bing's voice is very easy on the ...

(SOLUTION - PAGE 44)

COLLECTORS' CORNER

BING ON 8-TRACK CARTRIDGE - by Colin Pugh

The following list of 8-Track Cartridge Tapes, whilst appearing quite comprehensive, must not be taken as definitive. With one exception, they are all in my collection and are the only Bing Crosby cart ridges to come to my attention but I would be most surprised if there were not others which escaped my net - especially inthe USA where cartridge players enjoyed a far greater popularity than they did in the UK.

Best of Bing - MCA (UK) 8X-MCF 2540

Bing Crosby and Friends - Warner Brothers (UK) Y8W 1363

Bing Crosby and the Andrews Sisters - MCA Coral (UK) 8X2-CDSP 804

Bing Crosby Show - 5th November 1947 - Soundco (US) ORS 1

Bing Crosby Show - (?) - Soundco (US) ORS 3 (not in my collection)

Bing Crosby Show - 8th February, 1950 - Soundo (US) ORS 4

Bing Crosby Show - 25th April, 1951 - Soundco (US) ORS 5

Bing Crosby Show - 21st March, 1951 - Soundco (US) ORS 6

Bing Crosby Show - 26th March, 1951 - Soundco (US) ORS 39

Bing Crosby Show - 21st November, 1951 - Soundco (US) ORS 40

Bing Crosby Sings - Vocalion (US) 6-3603

Bing Crosby Sings the Great Country Hits - Capitol (Japan) CYP 1021
(Title on cartridge - "Country Hits")

Bing Goes Latin - MGM (UK) 3789 005

Bing 'n' Basie - Daybreak (UK) Y9DAL 2001

Christmas With The Stars - MCA (UK) Coral 8XCDL 8010

Couple of Song and Dance Men - United Artists (UK) 8XU 29888

Crosby Classics Vol 3 - Capitol (US) 8M 11740

Easy Listening American Style (A commercial issue without label or no.)

Great Country Hits - Capitol (Vine Series) (UK) 8X-VMP 1004

Great Memories From Old Time Radio - Columbia (US) 68 19 0058

Greatest Hits of Bing Crosby, The - M.F. Productions Inc (US) MF-7007-T

High Society - Capitol (UK) - 8X-SLCT 6116

Join Bing and Sing Along - Warner Brothers (UK) Y8W 1363

Man and His Music, A - Reprise (UK) Y8RD 1016

Mr Crosby and Mr Mercer - MCA Coral (UK) - 8X-CDL 8025

My Golden Favourites - Decca (US) - 6-4086

Rendezvous - RCA (Spain) - C8S 1067

Rendezvous - RCA (UK) - MP8 124

Sing-A-Long With Bing - Pickwick (UK) - H8 321

Sing a Rainbow - MCA Coral (UK) - 8X-CDL 8016

Southern Memoir - London (UK) ESACU 8499

Special Magic of Bing and Satchmo - MGM (UK) 3807 211

Special Magic of Bing Crosby - MGM (UK) 3807 223

That Christmas Feeling - MCA (US) MCAT 15019

That's What LIfe Is All About - United Artists (UK) 8XU 29703

Time to be Jolly - Daybreak (UK) Y8DAL 2007

White Christmas - MCA (UK) - 8X-MCF 2568

Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams - RCA (UK) MP8 167

(Following are Cartridges not in my collection. However, I have been advised that they have been issued.)

American Music Spectacular - Reader's Digest (US) (4 cartridge set. No numbers advised) LP issue: RD4 236 (or) RD4A 236. 10-LP set.

An Old Fashioned Christmas Reader's Digest (US) (3 cartridge set. No numbers advised) LP issue: RD4 215-3. 6 LP set.

Bing Crosby Golden Memories (60 Golden Songs) BBC Special Products (US) (Cartridge numbers and number of Cartridge per set - not advised) LP issue: P6-14370. 6 LP set.

Bing Crosby Show, The - Memorabilia (US) (When Radio Was King) M8-705

Bing Sings - Reader's Digest (US) - RD5-127-1 (3 cartridge set)

Bing Sings Again - Reader's Digest (US) - RD-138-1 (3 cartridge set)

Christmas Through the Years - Reader's Digest (US) - (2 cartridge set - no numbers advised) LP issue: RD4-143, 5 LP set.

Christmas With Bing - Reader's Digest (US) - RD5-175-1 (Single 'bonus' cartridge)

Easy Listening Swing - Reader's Digest (US) - (3 cartridge set - no numbers advised) LP issue: RB4-193 7 LP set.

Fabulous Memories of the Fabulous 40's. Reader's Digest (US) (3 cartridge set - no numbers advised) LP issue: RD4A-078 8 LP set

Fred Waring And The Pennsylvanians Sing America;s Favourite Songs. Reader's Digest (US) (3 cartridge set - no number advised) LP issue: RD4-238 (or) RD4A-238. 8 LP set.

George Burns and Gracie Allen, 1940's. - Memorabilia (US) When Radio Was King. M8-722

God Bless America - Reader's Digest (US) (3 cartridge set - no numbers advised) LP issue: RB4-035 7 LP set.

Golden Age of Entertainment, The. Reader's Digest (US). (4 cartridge set - no numbers advised) LP issue: RD4A-082-2 10 LP set

Golden Memories - Reader's Digest (US) (3 cartridge set - no numbers advised.) LP issue: RD4A-104 7 LP set.

Great Ladies of Song - Reader's Digest (US) (3 cartridge set - no number advised) LP issue: RB4-033. 7LP set.

Great Original Hits of the 50's and 60's. Reader's Digest (US) (3 cartridge set - no numbers available) 7 LP set. No numbers advised.

Great Stars and Their Greatest Songs, The. Reader's Digest (US) (3 cartridge set - no numbers advised) LP issue: RB4-057 7 LP set

Hoagy Carmichael - from 'Star Dust' to 'Ole Buttermilk Sky' - Book of the Month Club (US) - BOMC 71-5451. (2 cartridge set) No advice of LP issue

Legendary Performers (Entertainment Of The Century). This was issued in the US by Reader's Digest as a 7-LP boxed set, and following their usual pattern of issues, could also be issued on cartridge.

Memories of Hawaii - an All-Star Salute - Reader's Digest (US) 3 cartridge set- no numbers advised. LP issue: RB 4-204 7 LP set

Remembering the 40's - Reader's Digest (US) - 3 cartridge set - no numbers available. LP issue: RD4A-053 8 LP set

Sing Out America - Reader's Digest (US) - 3 cartridge set - no numbers available LP issue: RD4A-037 8 LP set

There's No Business Like Show Business - Book of the Month Club (US) BOMC 60-5256 (P4-14576) 4 LP set

Those Were Our Songs - the Early 40's. Reader's Digest (US) - 3 cartridge set - no numbers advised. 7 LP set - no numbers advised.

They Sing The SOngs - Reader's Digest (US) (3 cartridge set - no numbers advised) LP issue: RD4A-036 (8 LP set)

A Treasure of Jazz Greats - Reader's Digest (US) - 3 cartridge set. No number advised. LP issue: RD4-206. 8 LP set.

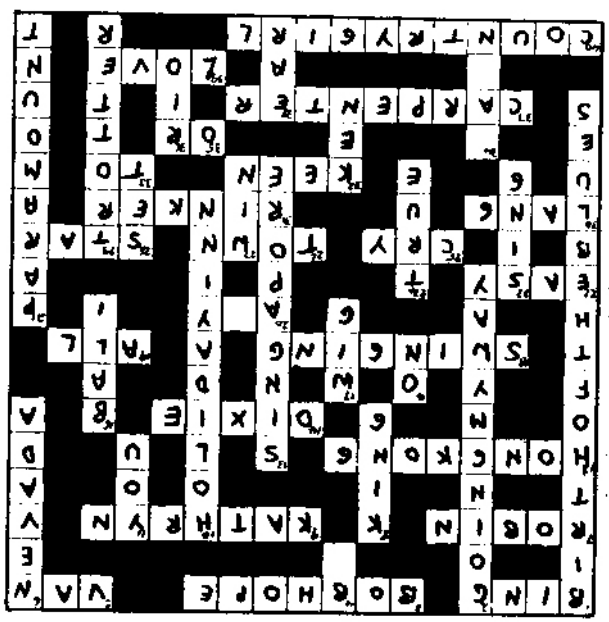
Tumbling Tumbleweeds - Reader's Digest (US) - 3 cartridge set - no numbers advised. LP issue: RD4A-229 7 LP set.

Twelve Stars of Christmas - Reader's Digest (US) - 3 cartridge set - no numbers advised. LP issue: RD4A-180 6 LP set.

With A Song In My Heart - Reader's Digest (US) - 3 cartridge set - no numbers advised. LP issue: RB4-230 7 LP set.

END

If anyone can add to Colin Pugh's list in any way, I will be happy to publish the information in these pages. BM



LETTER BOX

From Mark Scrimger, Parma, Michigan

The 'Transcribing Bing' article is terrific. Vern Taylor did such a great job on it with such in-depth research that every collector of Crosby will appreciate reading it.

I bought a copy of the 'Bing Crosby Sings' CD, even though I don't own a CD player. It's kind of akin to what happened 30 or so years ago when the record industry shifted from 78's to LPs and 45s. You couldn't play either of these new formats in your typical 78rpm record player but today, many many Crosby collectors are wishing that they had had the foresight to either grab up the last of the phased-out 78s or many of the boxed 45s or 10"LPs when they were introduced. They've all become dinosaurs now!

We have a new son named Jack Michael, born on August 24th. He's a healthy, bouncing, bundle of energy. (Congratulations Mark. I'm sure that all the members join me in wishing you and your wife the very best. Of course, by the time this comes out, your baby will be getting on to 12 months old!!! BM)

From Charles Baillie, California

I never pass a record store or counter without looking for Bing. Occasionally, I'm rewarded with a nugget or two! Although I didn't own a compact disc player, I still look at the 'pop' or 'easy listening sections on the CDs, as well as the LPs. Unfortunately, it doesn't take much time, as the 'pop' section continues to shrink as the 'rock' section grows. In any event, I did find the Bing/Basie record a few weeks ago - and acquired it. Later, I found the MCA 'Bing Crosby Sings' and purchased it. Now having two of Bing's albums on CD, I had an excuse to make the big investment in the player, and purchased a Siny #CDP-203. Needless to say, I've really enjoyed the records. The sound is perfect -no surface on the old 78's digitally re-recorded. Even "I'm Through With Love" recorded in 1931 sounds great. Also, it's good to know that the sound will never deteriorate no matter how often I play the disc.

From Stan Leland, New York

On the souvenir sheet for your screening of 'Starmaker' is a picture of an old friend of mine. In the movie (and in the still shot of course), the young funny-looking boy who sits in the corner on a stool with a dunce cap, is Danny Sacks. Many years ago, his sister, who was personal assistant to the famous movie director, George Cukor, offered me a job in Hollywood, but at that time, I was a New York boy and didn't want to move to the West coast. Well, actually, I did want to go to glamorous Hollywood. It was a most wonderful opportunity (something all the guys I ever grew up with dreamed about) but my father and mother were still alive then and I did not want to leave my family.

From Hugh McTeigue, 92 Baringa Road, Northbridge 2063 NSW Australia

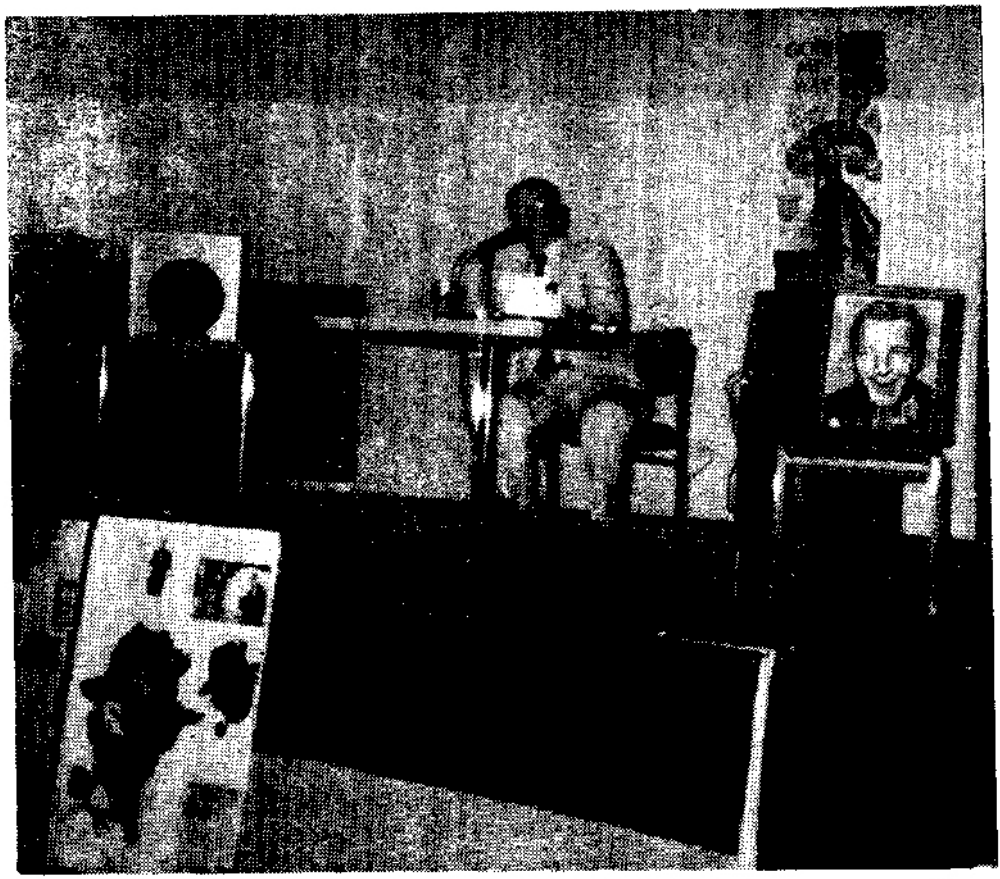
I would really like to establish contact with other members of the society, especially by cassette tape. Could you please put a note in your magazine. (Happy to, Hugh. BM)

From Arnold Baker, Bangor, Northern Ireland

I always meant to start an indexing system in my early days of Crosby collecting, but never got round to it, telling myself that I'd have plenty of time to do it when I retired. Oh yeah?! I've been retired almost five years now , and am further away from an index than ever. The very thought of even trying to start one brings me out in a cold sweat - two thousand LP's, including around seven-hundred Bings, untold numbers of cassettes and open reels and goodness knows how many titles in that little lot! Fifty thousand, at least, I'd estimate. I'm still much enjoying your magazine and have been exchanging Sinatra tapes with Keith Parkinson - nice fella. We have quite enlarged each other's collections in the last few months. I have just bought two Bing CD's - Bing 'n' Basie and the Christmas compilation - and I haven't got a CD machine to play 'em on yet!!! Hope to get a Sony player in the next week or so to add to the old system. Should be fun.

From Charlie Chapman, Punchbowl, NSW.

I am a life member of a small but unique club in Lakemba - a suburb of Sydney. The club is called 'The Airforce Navy Club' and, as the name implies, most of the members are ex-serving members of the two services. Like a lot of small clubs in NSW, we are feeling the pinch financially. To save costs on entertaining, we decided to



do our own thing. I had often dreamed of hearing Bing's voice fill the auditorium, and this gave me an idea. With the help of my wife Kath (she painted cartoons of Bing), I put a show together. We started with Bing's first recorded solo and ended with his last. As you are well aware, to tell Bing's story in ninety minutes is impossible, and the show strained my limited brain power to the utmost. However, apart from a smaller audience than I had hoped for, it all went very well indeed. After the show, I was delighted to comply with the many requests for more of Bing's records.
On reading of the wrangle going on with the BCHS in the States, I realize that I have probably broken every copyright in the book! I won't lose any sleep over it though.

TRADING POST

JACK SOUTHER AUCTION - CLOSING DATE JUNE 1ST, 1987

Please address all bids to: 2011-44th Ave, San Francisco, California, USA. 94116.

Jack writes: "I will also trade for my Bing U.S. label wants (45's, E.P.'s, 78's, L.P.'s) or rare non-commercial pressings. Additionally I have hundreds of U.S. Bing items, all sizes and speeds. Also books, candid photo's and hseet music. I reserve the right to reject inadequate offers."

Jack's List:

37 Australian Crosbyana 12" issues. (No "Shh! Vol 2).
51 Bing U.S. 12" - 78 RPM V Discs, nos 2 thru 893. (No Number 128)
2 Bing U.S. 12" - 78 RPM Singalong discs

U.S. 45 RPM BOX SETS

Decca 9-14, 9-18. 9-25, 9-29, 9-65, 9-66, 9-89, 9-101, 9-113, 9-117, 9-118, 9-119, 9-120, 9-143, 9-144, 9-145, 9-152, 9-194, 9-195, 9-198, 9-199, 9-200, 9-201, 9-204, 9-226, 9-232, 9-375.
ED819, ED1700 (17 EP's), ED 1800 (9 EP's).

RCA Victor WPT 5, WPT 35, EOD 1011.

Capitol EDM 750

Columbia G-4-11

U.S. 10" LP's

Decca 500, 5001, 5010, 5011, 5020, 5037, 5052, 5060, 5063, 5064, 5081, 5092, 5105, 5107, 5119, 5122, 5126, 5129, 5207, 5284, 5298, 5299, 5302, 5310, 5316, 5323, 5326, 5331, 5340, 5343, 5390, 5403, 5411, 5417, 5443, 5444, 5508, 5520, 5526, 6000, 6008, 6009. 6010, 6011, 6012, 6013, 6014, 6015.

Columbia CL 2502, 6027, 6105.

Brunswick BL 58000, 58001

RCA Victor LPT5,26 X Label LVA 1000

Philco 425

Jolly Roger 5016

Audio Archives 0026

The following four acetates are from Kathryn Crosby's auction held in San Francisco in 1982.

1. 33 1/3 RPM pressing, 7" dia. (one sided) CR 3095 "Hosanna to Horseshoes" with photo-facsimile of Bing's signature on label. Piano accomp. Special lyrics and parodies sung by Bing to: Mack the Knife, Did Your Mother Come From Ireland, Surrey With the Fringe on Top, The Eyes of Texas. N- condition.

2. 33 1/3 RPM professional cutting by Coast Recorders. Sung by Bing on July 20th, 1971. Titled "On the River St Jean", 8" dia. (one sided). Piano accomp. Special lyrics and parodies sung by Bing to: Mona Lisa, Floating Down the Old Green River, On the Road to Mandalay, By the River StMarie. N- condition

3. 45 RPM professional cutting by United Recording, titled "Hello Dolly". Trio accompaniment. 8" dia. (one sided). Special lyrics and parodies sung by Bing to: Hello Dolly, Mack the Knife, Hello Dolly. N- condition.

4. 33 1/3 RPM professional cutting. No label. Subject: "Quail Hunting in Texas". Trio accompaniment. 8" dia. (one sided). Special lyrics and parodies sung by Bing to: Did Your Mother Come From Ireland, (two tunes I couldn't identify), Bill, Old Man River, Did your Mother Come from Ireland. N- condition.

(As you can imagine, there are some <u>fabulous</u> collector's items in the above listing. You won't get many opportunites to bid on material like this, so if you're interested, don't wait! BM)

<u>Carl A Hällstrom, Jenny Linds väg 20, S-752 Uppsala, Sweden</u>

would like to purchase PAL/VHS video cassettes of Bing's films, especially the early Mack Sennett shorts.

<u>Geoff & Judy Christie's Antique Shop, 44 Bass Highway, Carrick Tasmania 7257</u> have the following group of 78's for sale - all up $50, postage and packing probably extra. Condition unknown.

Home on the range/Let's spend an evening at home, Please/Waltzing in a dream, Accidents will happen/And you'll be home, The friendly islands, Looks like a cold cold winter/A frosty Xmas, In the cool of the evening/Misto Cristofo Columbo, White Xmas/Lets start the new year right, Blue of the night/I'm waiting for ships, When you and I were young Maggie blues/Moonlight bay, Thanks/ Black moonlight, Autumn leaves/Marshmellow world, Stardust/Deep purple.

From Keith Parkinson, c/- this society

The Guy Mitchell Appreciation Society has requested our help. An EP on Coronet was issued in Australia called "Tribute To Bing" (KFP 122) and they would like to know the titles. Although they don't state it, I'm sure that they wouldn't mind a copy of the record, either!

(And speaking of Guy Mitchell, our next letter comes from:)
John Edwards, 8 Wiggins Street, Botany, NSW 2019
who is interested in trading Crosby LPs for Mitchell LPs.

John has the following 10" discs:

Stardust - Australian Brunswick LAA 8514 (VG)
- Australian Festival FR10 1329 (VG-)

Bing Sings Victor Herbert - Aust Brunswick LAA 8600 (VG)
Merry Xmas - USA Decca DL 5019 (VG)
Jerome Kern Songs - Aust Festival - FR10 810 (VG-)
I'm an Old Cowhand - Aust Festival FR10-975 (G-)
Auld Lang Syne - Aust Festival - FR10 - 1325 (VG)
El Bingo - Aust Festival FR10 - 1329 (G-)

John wants the following Guy Mitchel LPs:

(Australian)	
Voice of Your Choice	10" Philips
Red Garters	10" Philips (?)
Guy's Greatest Hits	CBS Coronet KLL 1664
Traveling Shoes	W&G WG25/S/5344
Same again	EMI AXIS - no details
Tribute to Bing	45 EP Coronet KFP 122
	(or any Guy Mitchell EP's)
(English)	
Guy Mitchell Sings	Columbia 33S1028
Voice Of Your Choice	Philips BBR 8031
A Guy In Love	Philips BBL 7246
Sunshine Guitar	Philips BBL 7465
Showcase of Hits	Philips BBL 7265
A Guy In Love	Hallmark HM 642

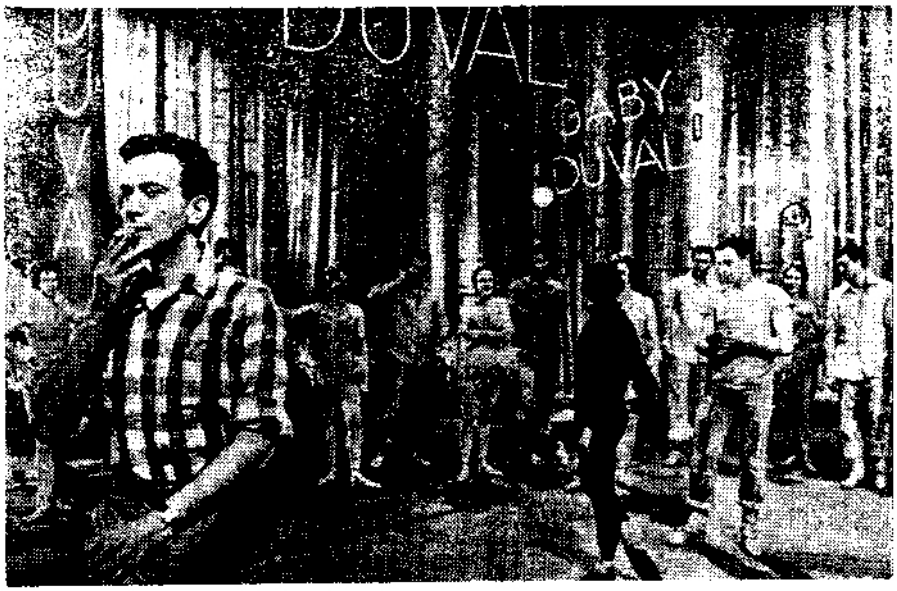
John is prepared to swap on a one-for-one basis.

The Making of a Movie

BING CROSBY AND A VIBRANT FRENCH BALLERINA named Jeanmaire appear together for the first time in Paramount's new musical comedy, "Anything Goes." Here is the story behind the picture—the choreography, the dance rehearsals, the recording sessions, and the film "takes" that go into the making of a movie

WHEN JEANMAIRE DANCED the explosive Carmen in a ballet created by her choreographer husband, Roland Petit, audiences in Paris and London cheered through thirty curtain calls. Since then, the tiny dancer, dubbed a "firecracker in tights" by critics, has captivated Broadway and Hollywood with her almost limitless vitality. Dancing since she was ten, Jeanmaire still loves her work, says: "If you don't work you are very unhappy." Here, she and Petit rehearse a dance sequence from one of the picture's big production numbers, the dream ballet.

Jeanmaire watches Petit and dancers rehearse a fountain tableau.



Jeanmaire plays Gaby Duval, the French dancer who dreams her name is in lights. After a short break, Petit and Jeanmaire's partner work out a new dance step.

ROBERT LEWIS HAS BECOME Broadway's "most in demand" director since his success with "The Teahouse of the August Moon." Now making his Hollywood debut directing "Anything Goes," he teams with Jeanmaire and Crosby to capture the rollicking spirit of Cole Porter's original show. Jeanmaire, who once thought she couldn't sing, adds a Continental note to the score as she and Crosby romp through all-time favorites like "You're the Top" and "Blow Gabriel, Blow."

Lewis calls for more action.

Jeanmaire's throaty voice lends a new seductiveness to the famous Porter music.

Between rehearsals, Bing brushes up on his French with an expert.

In a scene from the dream ballet, Jeanmaire greets New York photographers.

Jeanmaire is right at home as Gaby Duval, the girl who seeks stardom. She, too, once imagined Broadway as a place of bright lights and wonders. Although it's a familiar spot to her now, Jeanmaire says that the old magic is still there

In a rare moment of relaxation, Jeanmaire scrawls a heart for her native Paris

THE Q.B.C.S. REPORT

From Peter Traynor

PROGRESSIVE DINNER - SEPT 13, 1986

Our first progressive dinner was held at several member's residences. Commencing at Treasurer Dot Cairn's place with a getting-to-know-you soup course, we progressed to the Bridgers for the main meal, then to the Cliffords for dessert, and finally, to the Carlyons for supper. Plenty of talking and music made it a must for future occasions. This event was our premier money raiser for the year. At $8 per head we made a handsome profit. Thanks to all the hosts and hostesses.

TRIBUTE TO BING ON HIS PASSING - ANNIVERSARY FUNCTION - OCT 18, 1986

This function was held at Les O"Donell's home. The first half consisted of a musical tribute to Bing which included music from 1926 to 1977 and featuring tracks not previously played at our functions. The second half featured a video entitled 'Bing Crosby - his life and legend'. An enjoyable night with Peter Traynor and Les O'Donnell flat to the boards on mike and turntable.

CHRISTMAS PARTY - DEC 13, 1986

Bellbird Grove, a leafy setting 16 km from Brisbane was the venue for our annual Christmas Party. The day started at 10 am with a champagne brunch. Cooks Vic and Beryl Bridger provided a tasty meal and Ron and Dawn Gillette were busy bar persons dispensing the champers at a furious pace. Music and quizzes were the order of the afternoon with Hughie McTeague of Sydney winning first prize. Santa was to the fore with presents although he nearly did not arrive due to the chief reineer not turning up.

'GET OUT THOSE OLD PHONOGRAPH RECORDS' FUNCTION - FEB 7, 1987

Les O'Donnell's residence provided the venue for this night of musical nostalgia. Some twenty records from 1914 to 1954 featuring various artists, including our mentor, were appreciated by the

members. We had a guest announcer in the person of Jamie Kelly. Jamie, who is blind, is an announcer with Radio station 4RPH and he demonstrated an amazing knowldge of early Australian music, With Peter Traynor as D.J. and Les O'Donnell on the tapes, knobs and turntable, it was a busy first half. After a sumptuous supper, a video "When You're Smiling" was shown. This video starred Frankie Laine, The Modernaires, The Mills Brothers, Kay Starr, Billy Daniels and Bob Crosby and his Orchestra. An excerpt from MR MUSIC featuring the Merry Macs, Bing and Groucho Marx singing 'Life Is So Peculiar' finished off a great night - much appreciated by the 20 or so members present.

****

THE B.C.H.S. REPORT

The Bing Crosby Historical Society move to larger quarters on September 1st last year was accomplished without problem. It took 2 months to get the gallery and office ready for vistors. The formal opening took place on Sunday November 2nd.

The opening theme was "Music" featuring a free-standing display in a sitting room with rocker, floor lamp and phonograph - waiting for someone to sit and listen to records. One end of the room is devoted to Bing. The remaining wall space is devoted to sheet music of historical significance.

In a separate room is the library with 105 feet of shelf space holding LPs, 78s, 45s, video tapes, books, V-Discs and photo albums.

On the day of the opening, visitors arrived until 2pm. They were then escorted to "Mr Kelly's" Restaurant where they were entertained by a private interlude by Mr Kelly and Company.

A plentiful array of finger food was enjoyed by all along with a glass of wine. Some guests lingered til 5 pm. and every one liked the professional appearance of the displays in the gallery and library. It was an auspicious event for the BCHS.

(Reprinted from the BCHS newsletter "The Crooner")

JONZO RECORDS

THE ORIGINS OF THE CHRONOLOGICAL BING CROSBY LP REISSUES

by John McNicholas

Sometime in October of 1983, I approached the highly respected jazz musician/sound engineer John R.T. Davies with a view to his cutting for me a private, 'one off' series of LP's - purely for my own collection - to be called THE CHRONOLOGICAL BING CROSBY.

After four of these LP's had been cut - at considerable expense - it was suggested by John and another friend Dave Bennett (producer of the JSP series on BING CROSBY IN THE THIRTIES) that I consider issuing the LP chronology on a commercial basis.

In the light of this proposal I immediately thought in terms of 'tens of thousands of pounds' and that the whole thing, financially, was way out of my league. But when a limited issue was suggested and the costs of this were worked out, I calculated that I could just about finance the project provided that it was limited to 1000 pressings of each album. The decision to go ahead with this was made in April of 1984 and JZ-1/2 appeared together a few months later.

Like all serious Bing collectors, I had always wanted to see his complete commercially issued output reissued and fully documented in LP form, but it seemed that because of the possibilities of large sales for such a project were somewhat remote, none of the major companies cared to pursue it.

The series is directed primarily at the specialist Bing collector and connoisseur and is intended as a tribute to the greatest-ever singer of popular songs. From the outset, it was regarded as essential that all available takes of each title be included to render the series as complete as possible.

As a new name for the new label, I decided on JONZO. This is a form off address I aquired some ten years ago from my six year old nephew.

ALso needed was a sleeve note writer who was fully conversant with Bing's career and recordings. With this in mind, I approached Colin Pugh whom I considered to be qualified to fill the position. Colin was only too happy to take on this task as he too was of the mind that a Bing LP chronology was long overdue and that here

was a chance to 'get it down properly' once and for all. He insisted on providing his services free and needless to say, this kindness was greatly appreciated as the JONZO funds were - as now - far from healthy.

An important aim of this project is the hope of its eventual recognition as the 'definitive' Bing series. To achieve this would mean an all round, high class product was consistently being maintained. Good quality prints of early Bing photos had to be located and borrowed, hired or purchased for use on the LP sleeves. At first, this was far from easy and, for a while, I despaired of ever aquiring enough pre-1930 pictures for the Paul Whiteman period of sleeves. With the sleeves, I have tried to match the presentation with that of the superb sound reproduction.

With the decision to go ahead with the series, John Davies began an all out, in depth, no holds barred operation aimed at the improvement of the Paul Whiteman sound. The merits of the original 'one off' series consisted of an approximate 25% reduction of surface noise without losing any 'brightness' of sound. This had resulted in a quality as good as any Bing/Whiteman recording I had heard at that time. They now sound almost acoustical compared with their successors.

From the start, therefore, it was important to locate and gain access to good quality 78 originals from which to work. I this, I have been most fortunate in enjoying the freedom of the shelves of some five or six experienced Bing/Whiteman collections in which, for the most part, usable originals were found. However, it was soon apparent that the mint Victors contained more surface noise than the 'not so mint' but still noisy HMV's which we were - unfortunately - obliged to use.

Other problems with good originals included the under-powered Bing vocal on THE CALINDA. Here, through poor balancing, Bing is heard to be much too far from the microphone and although, through skilful editing, etc, John has managed to bring the voices 'nearer', the improvement is marginal and it remained a problem that could not be completely overcome.

Another item which caused some frustration and delay was a processing fault which was probably inherent in the mastering of WHAT PRICE LYRICS - 3. We had at our disposal two E+ Victors - each pressed from a different stamper, but both containing the same fault. The symptoms of this were that the disc played - in parts - like a worn disc. This was most noticable in the vocal

trio ensembles. The marginally better Victor was used although the fault remained. It's possible that this processing fault was the reason for take 1 of this title being issued in the early thirties. Take 1 plays perfectly.

Problems were also encountered in the attempts to match the sound character of some alternate masters with those of the originally issued takes. This applied particularly to BVE 41681-2/3 THERE AIN'T NO SWEET MAN and BVE 41696-2/3 MISSISSIPPI MUD. This is to say that because of a recording difference in the two takes of MISSISSIPPI MUD, Bix's cornet tone sound much brighter on take 2 than take 3. No amount of work could match the two takes perfectly. The two masters of SWEET MAN posed a similiar problem.

BVE 41689-6 FROM MONDAY ON proved to be a major headache due to the vocal intro. being markedly under-recorded. The best copy available to work from was an E- Victor. An editing job was accomplished which corrected the level of this intro. but unfortunately also raised the already quite apparent surface noise. It is hoped to rectify this should a better copy be found but it is thought that all copies, no matter what the condition, suffer in the same way.

With regard to the six solo sides from 1929 (MY KINDA LOVE, TILL WE MEET etc), it was found that mint English Columbia pressings were inferior to the American Columbia's in that the vocals sounded slightly muffled or 'foggy'. This seems to be the work of a processing fault. By comparison, American N-/E+ copies sound bright and sparkling but are extremely hard to find. At the present time, we are trying to locate such a copy of Co 1851-D I KISS YOUR HAND MADAME/BABY OH WHERE CAN YOU BE? for inclusion on JZ-8.

(Note: Since writing the above, John informs us that they have found exceptionally clean British pressings of the last-mentioned discs which will be used on JZ-8. BM)

The foregoing are just a few of the setbacks we've had with the original 78's but in spite of these and considering that all the discs have come from a mere handful of collections, I think we have been most fortunate with the overall quality at our disposal and I hope that this happy situation continues for the future albums in the series.

John McNicholas.

FROM OUT OF THE PAST

COCKTAILS FOR TWO

Paramount had just used Bing Crosby as one of a big cast of radio stars in *The Big Broadcast*, a revue type of film about the radio industry. Actually, it was a new and experimental kind of musical, with the studio mostly interested in finding out which of the nation's radio favorites were also potential film stars. Of the long list of airwave names that had spots in the film, only two acts, Bing Crosby and Burns and Allen, received the sort of acclaim that meant Hollywood stardom. Paramount signed both acts to star in future musicals.

Following the release of *Big Broadcast*, Bing was back in New York still selling smokes, this time as the star of the weekly Chesterfield hour. He was also turning out hit after hit on Brunswick Records, starring in deluxe night-club engagements, and headlining in stage shows at the country's largest movie palaces—all at the same time. His four-a-day appearances at our company's large Paramount Theaters in Times Square and in Brooklyn stretched out to 28 consecutive weeks, smashing every box-office record at those houses. From all these activities, the money was pouring into the Crosby coffers. Brother Everett was soon forced to hire consultants to find places to invest Bing's burgeoning wealth. Orange-juice packagers, office buildings, racetracks, and show-business enterprises were to be among the vehicles used for investment. The man who only a year before was struggling to provide a bare living for his new wife and himself was now well on the way toward amassing what eventually became one of the two largest individual fortunes in show business, the other being that of his future co-star, Bob Hope. I don't think Bing ever knew how much money was rolling in each week, or how fast it was all pyramiding. Everett, now augmented by two more Crosby brothers, was relieving Bing of all the business details, leaving Bing to concentrate on his singing and his golf. The fact that many of

these investments were accumulated at the bargain-basement prices of the early Thirties, when anyone with some cash could acquire practically anything he wanted for peanuts, didn't hurt much either.

Arthur and I had learned that the studio was preparing, as Crosby's first solo starring vehicle, a lavish filmization of *College Humor*, adapted from the popular novel *Bachelor of Arts* by Dean Pales, a book we had read and knew to be sprinkled with logical spots for numbers. That was the script we wanted. Crosby had by now become a real powerhouse as a songmaker. The combined impact of his radio appearances, the eagerly awaited monthly recordings on Brunswick's release list, and now the big musical films planned for him, were enough to catapult any good song to the top of the charts. We were well aware that the *College Humor* score was a prize that every songsmith in the land coveted. I say this without fear of contradiction, for aside from the five Crosby films I worked on, other Crosby scores were later written by such immortals as Irving Berlin, Cole Porter and Rodgers and Hart.

As much as we wanted to do *College Humor*, at Paramount you just didn't ask for an assignment, any more than a doctor goes after a wealthy patient. The accepted thing to do was to just sit there and wait for it. Sometimes you got the one you wanted. Other times the dice came up with someone else's number. So we did just that—sat there and waited, making a pretense of reading the other scripts that had been sent to us. Sat there and just hoped that the studio heads would see the obvious justice and good sense of giving the plum to the team that had turned out Bing's biggest-selling song hit. Day after day, we sat around waiting for news. The suspense was something awful.

The anxiety ended one morning at Oblath's Diner across the street from the studio. I was having breakfast and reading Louella Parsons' column in the *Los Angeles Examiner*. Right there in her column was the item we were waiting for. Louella revealed that she had learned through the grapevine that Paramount was assigning the score of Bing's first starrer to the writers of his popular hit, "Just One More Chance."

Arthur and I went to the Grove that night and opened a bottle of champagne. We were so elated that we forgot to be sore at the studio for telling Louella before us. In fact, that night we weren't mad at anybody.

College Humor, as we expected, was a juicy, gratifying assignment. The picture, directed by Wesley Ruggles, established Bing

as a film superstar and was one of the top grossers of 1933. Three of our *College Humor* songs achieved hit status: "Learn to Croon," "Down the Old Ox Road," and "Moonstruck"—all remembered to this day as early Crosby standards.

"Learn to Croon," in fact, contained a vocal trick for Bing which he capitalized on forever after. The middle section of the chorus goes:

> You murmur "Boo boo boo, boo boo"
> —And when you do,
> She'll murmur "Boo boo boo, boo boo"
> And whisper love words to you.

The "Boo boo boo" sound has been the familiar Crosby trademark throughout the years.

"Down the Old Ox Road" was a sneaky bit of lyrical quasi-pornography which somehow got by the censors. I'll never know why. Especially in those Victorian movie days, when the Motion Picture Producers Association rules did not even permit a word like "damn" to be used. In the script, it was brought out that when a college boy seduced a girl into sexual fulfillment, he was taking her "down the old ox road." Girls who had been down the ox road were the ones most likely to succeed with college lads, as we were reminded throughout the story. The short chorus of the song really left nothing to the imagination if you knew the code words, which apparently the MPPA censors didn't. I was almost sure it would be deleted from the final cut of the film when I wrote:

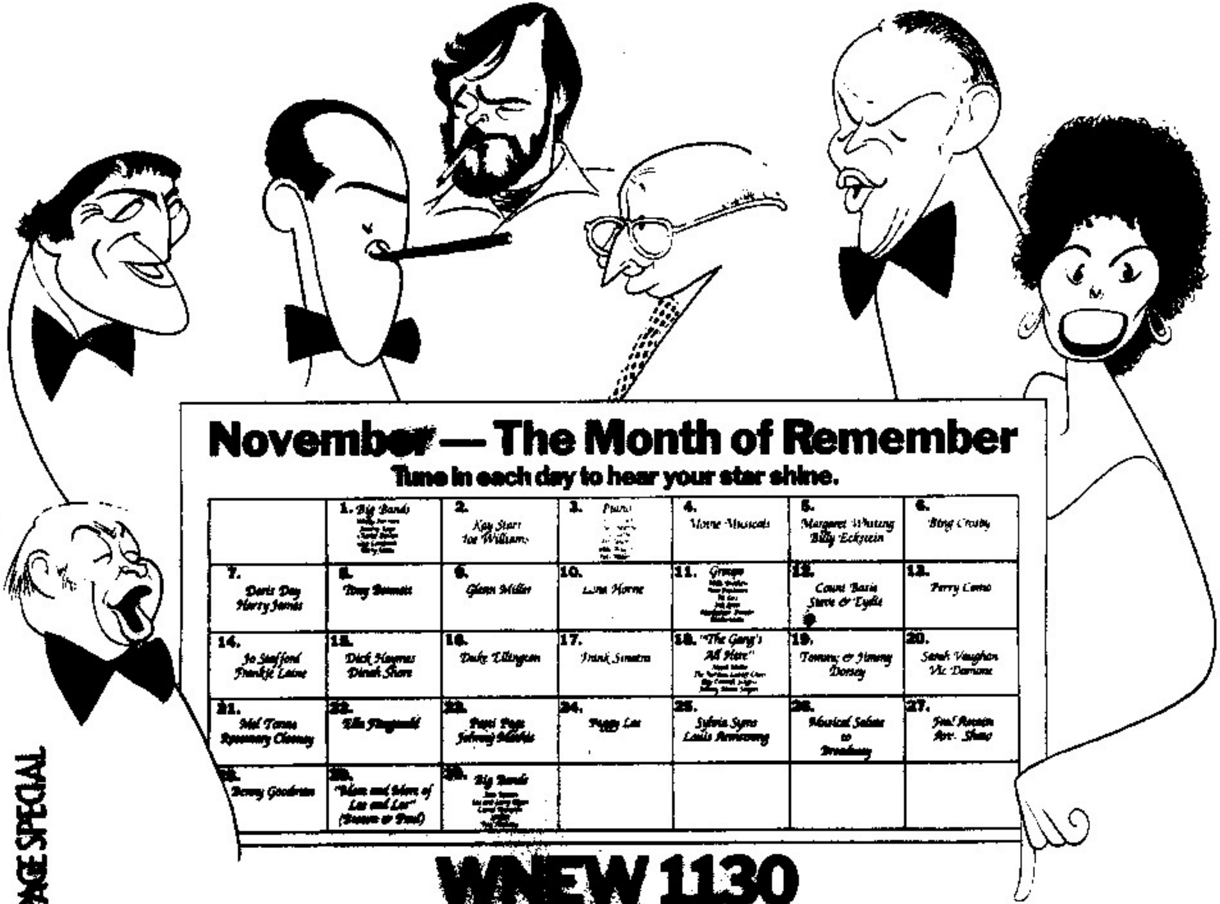
> Down the old ox road,
> Though you'll never find out where it is by looking in maps,
> With a little investigation you'll discover perhaps
> That this old tradition's not a place, but just a proposition
> On the old ox road, the old ox road.

The lyric got by that way, and has never been changed.

After that, there's just room to say goodbye. See you soon.

Bob Hope

BACK PAGE SPECIAL



November — The Month of Remember

Tune in each day to hear your star shine.

	1. Big Bands [illegible]	2. Kay Starr Joe Williams	3. Piano [illegible]	4. Movie Musicals	5. Margaret Whiting Billy Eckstein	6. Bing Crosby
7. Doris Day Harry James	8. Tony Bennett	9. Glenn Miller	10. Lena Horne	11. Groups [illegible]	12. Count Basie Steve & Eydie	13. Perry Como
14. Jo Stafford Frankie Laine	15. Dick Haymes Dinah Shore	16. Duke Ellington	17. Frank Sinatra	18. "The Gang's All Here" [illegible]	19. Tommy & Jimmy Dorsey	20. Sarah Vaughan Vic Damone
21. Mel Torme Rosemary Clooney	22. Ella Fitzgerald	23. Patti Page Johnny Mathis	24. Peggy Lee	25. Sylvia Syms Louis Armstrong	26. Musical Salute to Broadway	27. [illegible] Art. Shaw
28. Benny Goodman	29. "More and More of Lee and Les" (Brown & Paul)	30. Big Bands [illegible]				

WNEW 1130
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METROMEDIA RADIO